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ABSTRACT

This UNESCO bulletin includes reports that focus on diagnoses and strategies that ratify the validity of the goals set by the Major Project in the Field of Education in the Latin American and Caribbean Region. Four articles are featured: "Literacy, Human Rights and Democracy" (Jose Rivero H.); "Primary Schooling and Illiteracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: 1980-1987" (Ernesto Schiefelbein; And Others); "Resources Management and Development in Some Caribbean Primary and All-Age Schools" (Olga James-Reid); and "Bilingual Education in the Autonomous Regions of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua: Experience and Prospects" (Massimo Amadio). The document concludes with a listing of Regional Office for Education in Latin American and the Caribbean (OREALC) activities and OREALC publications. (DB)

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bulletin

THE MAJOR PROJECT IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

In The Latin American and Caribbean Region

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The Major Project
in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
has resulted from a consensus
on the part of government representatives
of the countries of the region
concerning the necessity
for a renewed, intensive and sustained effort
to make good deficiencies and to meet
unsatisfied basic educational needs
between now and the year 2000
as a prerequisite for the development
of the those countries
in line with objectives shared by all
and by means of actions in which
each country's own effort
may be benefited
by horizontal, subregional, regional
and international co-operation.

THE MAJOR PROJECT IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION
In Latin America and the Caribbean

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BULLETIN 20

Santiago, Chile, December 1989

In order that this bulletin
may reflect in as complete and timely manner as possible
the initiatives and activities carried out
by each and all the countries of the region
in relation to the Major Project in the Field of
Education in the Latin America and Caribbean Region,
pertinent official bodies are invited
to send to
the Unesco Regional Office for Education in
Latin America and the Caribbean
all information they wish
to have published in this bulletin.

The publication of this bulletin has been made possible by the voluntary contribution of the Spanish Government to the activities of the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The views expressed in the signed articles are those of their authors, and are not necessarily shared by UNESCO.
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PRESENTATION

This edition of the bulletin of the Major Project covers the last quarter of 1989 and includes reports that are characteristic of the work accomplished during that year: diagnoses and strategies which ratify the validity of the goals set by the Major Project in the Field of Education in the Latin American and Caribbean Region. As stated in the Guatemala Declaration, made at PROMEDLAC III, all of the member countries of the region are fully aware that universal basic education, the eradication of illiteracy and greater quality of education are all prerequisites for development, peace and democracy.

To reaffirm these ideas and encourage involvement in activities designed to mark 1990 as International Literacy Year - as declared by the United Nations - "Literacy, Human Rights and Democracy" deals with the interdependence of these three aspects which have become basic human rights in themselves.

The progress made and difficulties encountered in Major Project actions are evaluated and presented here as a preview of the report on education in Latin America and the Caribbean scheduled for publication early next year. The study includes numerous statistics and suggests several facets of the situation which must be taken into consideration when evaluating illiteracy and basic schooling for the 1980-87 period and planning effective work on these issues for the future.

In the same spirit, Olga James-Reid's study addresses the development and management of primary schools in English-speaking Caribbean countries and Massimo Amadio gives us a creative vision of the development of bilingual education, based on experiments on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua.

And, as always, the bulletin includes information on the work of the Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean and the latest publications to appear during this quarter.

LITERACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

José Rivero H. (*)

The decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations to proclaim 1990 "International Literacy Year" has a double significance: it states the vast magnitude of illiteracy, and it recognizes how insufficient the efforts undertaken by many countries and by the international community are to face the problem.

If the present trend continues, mankind will enter the twenty-first century with a minimum of 954 million illiterate adults, since their overall number increases, partly due to high demographic growth, in spite of a sizeable reduction of the number of illiterates as compared to the total population in many countries. The seriousness of the problem is sharpened by the fact that today, at the threshold of the last decade of the century, more than 100 million children do not have access to any kind of primary education at all, and that more than a billion people will not have any access to available basic knowledge, nor to training or to technology which might improve their quality of life and increase their chances of taking part in the development of their local or national community.

Seen as a whole, this situation represents a global violation of the principles of equality between men and of the fundamental right to education, recognized as a basic condition to achieve other rights. It is thus clear that while illiteracy first of all affects the personal development of men and women and their families, it goes beyond this individual aspect in more than one way and even beyond each nation considered separately. Thus, no single country can make adequate use of scientific and technological achievements to progress and develop if its population presents high illiteracy rates. The lack of writing capacity is therefore a direct obstacle to widening and renewing national identities themselves.

Illiteracy should be considered in terms of inequality: inequality in access to knowledge coupled with inequality in access to wellfare. It is not pure coincidence that more than 98% of world illiterates live in the poorer geographical areas and human groups, while the so-called industrialized world spends more and more on superfluous goods and on nuclear armament; it is not a coincidence that Third World oligarchical groups live alongside with multitudes of miserable people, and that women and natives are the ones who least have access to educational provision. Illiteracy is therefore one of the main illustrations of the gap between the privileged and the disinherited.

Hence it is considered a fact that the origin of illiteracy is closely associated with the overall socio-economic situation and the degree of development of a country, with the differences between urbanization and rural backlog, with socio-educational inequalities and with unsolved ethnical and cultural problems. This association leads to a recognition of the fact that global figures mask profound differences between regions, between countries, and inside the latter; it also leads to assimilate illiteracy with the insufficient provision of resources to education presumably stemming from a global insufficiency of resources: i.e. poverty at the national level and, in quite a number of cases, an inadequate distribution of available resources.

(*) José Rivero H., Peruvian educator, presently Adult Education Specialist of the Regional Office for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC). Report presented to the international seminar on "Education for International Understanding, Peace and Human Rights in Latin America", which took place in Guatemala City in August, 1989, under the auspices of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (FMANU/WFUNA).

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These persistent inequalities result in the exclusion of illiterates in the social, economic and political spheres. They give rise to a curious vicious circle: illiterates are marginalized because they cannot read, and they cannot learn to read because they are excluded. This gives us a kind of reasoning which makes illiteracy the cause and, at the same time, the consequence of poverty.

The above substantially affects observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the very idea of democracy.

Effective Exercise of Human Rights?

Growing illiteracy affects not only observance of Article 26 of the Declaration of Human Rights concerning education (1), but also most of the other articles. Article 2 stipulates that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration...", but a logical question would be how to invoke the rights and freedoms if one has neither the means to become aware thereof, nor the possibility do defend them?

Articles 4 to 14 of the Declaration concerning situations of human dignity and recognition of legal rights require reading-writing skills, without which it is difficult, if not impossible, to exercise them. In effect, if we examine the right to "equal protection of the law", an illiterate is not in a condition to know what documents are required for administrative or legal proceedings; he is not in a condition to understand the purport of questions he may be asked, or accusations he might be exposed to; he will not be able to control the exatitude and impartiality with which his replies are noted; in these conditions, he depends on third parties to defend his life and liberty and has no way of controlling that defense.

The rights to nationality (Art. 15), to found a family (Art. 16), to own property (Art. 17), to freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Art. 18), to social security (Art. 22, 24 and 25), to work, a just remuneration and to association (Art. 20 and 23), all these rights are better exercised by persons who can read and write, an indispensable educational condition to gain access to and to process information, to create new knowledge and to participate in their particular family, communal or national environment. It is particularly dramatic to observe how the right to work and to a free choice of employment is more and more conditioned in all societies by reading and writing capacities; it goes without saying that jobs requiring no qualifications, or those which are more hazardous for physical and mental health are reserved for those who cannot read or write; likewise, the least educated are the first to be struck by recession and unemployment.

Being illiterate makes it particularly difficult to exercise the rights to freedom of opinion and of expression (Art. 19) and to participate in the cultural life of the community and to protection of scientific, literary or artistic productions of which somebody is the author (Art. 27).

Many examples could be given to illustrate this. However, few are as clear as the effects of colonialism and conquest on the life of peoples with own languages and cultural and artistic expressions of extraordinary value, who became second-class citizens, idolizers and illiterate when they were exposed to economic and military dominion. One of the central reasons for the regrettable illiteracy rates in the world today can be sought in the imposing of languages, of foreign alphabets and different production modes, as well as in the devalorizing of indigenous cultures and their artistic, literary or scientific expressions.

Briefly, the right to learn continues to be a condition for a true, effective and universal observance of human rights (2).

(1) Article 26 (1) "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory...".

(2) The Declaration of the Fourth International Conference on Adult Education, held in Unesco, Paris, in March 1985, placed special emphasis on this right, as can be seen from the following extracts:
"The right to learn is:
– the right to read and write
– the right to question and reflect
- the right to imagination and creation
– the right to study one's environment and write its history
– the right to access to educational resources
– the right to develop individual and collective competences.
The right to learn is an indispensable instrument for the survival of mankind today...
- If populations are to satisfy their essential needs, including nutritional, they must have the right to learn.
- If women and men are to live in good health, they must have the right to learn.
- If war is to be avoided, it is necessary to learn to live in peace, to learn to understand one another.
- Learning is the keyword.
- A fundamental human right, its legitimity is universal..."

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Insufficient Democracy

The idea of democracy is closely associated with individual and social participation, with equal rights, free choice of authorities and power control. It is therefore important to mention here that the various forms of democratic organization –whether direct or indirect– emphasize both "individual freedom" and, alternatively, the need to gain and safeguard "equality".

Illiteracy directly affects the very notion of democracy, whatever alternative option there may be in the conflict between the individual and the "general will", or between predominance of equality over freedom.

In a world where some countries' legislation still maintain distinction between literates and illiterates –even denying the latter citizenship– in which millions of men and women cannot exercise their voting right in full awareness because they cannot read or write, it makes no sense to claim observance of Art. 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that "everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country..." and also that he "has the right to equal access to public service in his country".

Sometimes, illiterates do participate in political community activities, but outside the local level such activities are generally totally closed to them, and it is more and more difficult for illiterates to obtain responsibility posts in institutions. The question to be asked, then, is: How can somebody participate in democracy without being able to use the written information and reflection material on the subjects under debate?

Now, democracy is achieved, set up and consolidated not only through political and social processes, but also through education. A national education system can exercise decisive influence on the building and strengthening of democracy, through specific references in programmes, through curriculum contents and methods, and through training for democracy of all its agents, as well as the different practices of non formal education, in which preference is given to the use of communication media.

In this respect, adult education is the best suited form of education to encourage political thinking, social organization and a democratic everyday behaviour. Literacy programmes, programmes of basic education for young people and adults, of civic education, cooperative education, community development, trade union training and programmes for women, all these form a considerable set of educational experiences which may open up new perspectives that while democracy takes shape in political structures, it is consolidated in everyday life.

Literacy as a Basic Right

Literacy is the first step to conquer one's right to education and to take part in the building of democracy. Giving an individual, or a social group, access to reading and writing is providing them with the means of expressing themselves politically and with the basic tools to participate in decision-taking regarding their existence and their future.

If illiteracy is the expression of lack of democracy and an obstacle for full observance of human rights, then acquiring the written language and thereby reducing illiteracy, is equivalent to a democratic due and, as we said before, an essential condition for the full exercise of most of the rights proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. But literacy also makes it possible to accede to systematic education, thereby making illiterates' introduction to science and technique more democratic and helping them to reach new forms and structures of thinking and knowledge. Learning to read and write well is a training process which requires development of the capacity for analysis, synthesis and abstraction, all basic elements to think and reflect critically on the world which surrounds the literacy learner.

Literacy moreover has social and psychological effects. It enables the new literate, now armed with new skills, to face a situation which used to mean shame and discredit to him, and in which he, the former illiterate, now becomes an "educated" community member. Literacy helps him to leave dependence and inferiority feelings behind; this is even more the case with new literates among minority groups and women, categories which are particularly disadvantaged, from the point of view of social condition and power. Briefly to become literate boosts one's sense of value and efficiency, this again means better arms to adapt to change and to embark in a strive for a more equitable social, economic and political development.

But literacy should also be seen from another angle. It is an expression of the right to educate, of a democratization of the social education function which, as we shall see, is a fundamental element in the construction of democracy.

It is well known that leaders of massive and mobilizing literacy enterprises with impressive social and educational impact afterwards came to ask themselves who had drawn more advantage from the campaigns: the new literates, or rather members of the young literacy brigades, who felt socially

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useful to their country, acquired a higher sense of their own value through the contact with a new reality and discovered unknown capacities and values in themselves. In effect, in the case of massive campaigns, but also in smaller scale, or more conventional, programmes, literacy action constitutes an exercise in democracy, in which the problem of the illiterate is adopted and shared by all, or almost all, of a society with access to reading-writing skills. Literacy agents, in contact with a reality, they had often not imagined, of injustice, lack of services, of poverty, can be a tremendous mechanism towards conscience of the need for a real democratization in access to education and to basic goods.

It is important, however, when promoting literacy to leave behind many traditional ways and methods conditioned by the notion of illiteracy as a "scourge", a "plague" or a "curse" to be eradicated, seeing illiterates as "victims" to be redeemed. Rather, literacy action should be seen as a first step prior to other forms of education, as the only effective tool to gain access to information, to create knowledge and to form the groundwork to acquire new skills for life.

The definition of literacy and basic learning needs vary with social, economic and cultural change. Literacy action should not be limited, or static, it should not concern only oral, written or mathematical aspects, but rather evolve towards diverse and changing needs. It is up to each country to define and apply literacy and basic knowledge, as well as to provide appropriate opportunities for each individual and comn.unity and seek ways to improve and broaden objectives and use of tools and to determine learning contents. For example, many societies cannot wait for literacy programmes to be set up to provide special competences and basic knowledge of such matters as health, nutrition, child care or certain forms of production and productivity. It is obvious that the transmission of such knowledge, and the contents of basic learning required therefor, will be facilitated by literacy action but should not be a prerequisite therefor.

Dilemmas Facing Illiteracy in Latin America

In Latin America, two phenomena converge which are closely associated with the causes and possible solutions to overcome illiteracy: a context of acute crisis and economic recession with particularly severe effects on ever-growing numbers of dispossessed, paralleled with a political democratization process which tends to become stronger, as clearly demonstrated by the progressive disappearance of authoritarian military regimes.

In this context, the problem of illiteracy is seen from different points of view. Officially, countries in the region have committed themselves to eliminate illiteracy, or diminish it drastically, before the end of the century (3). However, despite considerable progress made in setting up national programmes –which proves the existing interest in facing the problem– the results, policies and educational practices in a number of countries have not lived up to the official commitment. The main reason is failing management ability in states struck by a structural economic crisis, the result of which has been cutting down in social spending and consequently in education budgets. Another factor is the impact the crisis has had among illiterate population groups –characterized by extreme poverty, economic informality and social disorganization– forcing all members of a family to assume economic roles, thereby making it difficult to set up pressure groups, who could prevail upon society and governments to satisfy their demands. Further explanations of this situation can be found in the fact that socio-economic measures are persistently put off, languages and cultural expressions among indigenous populations are officially devalorized, and the internal wars going on in some countries between government forces and armed opposition groups are exercising considerable impact on juvenile illiteracy.

Alongside with these factors, one can observe a clear tendency among powerful technocratic groups in public sector central administrations and in international educational financing organizations to minimize, and even ignore, illiteracy in their list of priorities, their arguments being practical and efficiency-minded, such as "it is more important and necessary to allot resources to school enrolment, to educational infrastructures, to educational materials and to higher education, than to literacy action". The reasons they give to devaluate the problem of illiteracy are: the considerable expansion observed between 1970 and 1985 of the population made literate through schooling (from 110 to 209 million), the fact that a high proportion of illiterates is

(3) With support from Unesco and other international organizations, a Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean has been in operation since 1981. The project has the following objectives for year 2000: to generalize basic education for schoolage children, to eliminate illiteracy and to improve the quality and efficiency of education systems.

found in the population of more than 35 years of age, which would make the learning process more difficult, and finally that development action should be concentrated on the more modern sectors of society, and that requires strengthening of certain parts of higher education to provide the technical manpower needed therefor. Briefly, they claim that the problem can be solved through expansion of school enrolment alone, and that it makes no sense to spend scarce public resources on literacy action for adults, who do not take a significant part in active economic life.

However, they forget various important aspects. In the first place, that the illiteracy question is a structural and historical one, with complex relations –as for example ethnic-cultural ones– which requires special and careful treatment. Secondly, in spite of progress in educational expansion, the problem is so acute and serious that the total number of absolute illiterates has remained close to 44 million over the last 20 years; if action is not taken in a determined and integral way, it is possible that this figure will not change, and might even increase, due to the increasing poverty and misery in the region.

Another important element to be considered is the direct repercussion of adult illiteracy on low school enrolment and illiteracy among children; today, 8,5 million schoolage children have no access to school, and hundreds of thousands drop out, repeat, or are expelled from school, due to the shortcomings and deficiencies of basic schooling. The immense majority of these children belong to the poorest social classes, and they need learning space and family atmosphere, in which parents encourage regular school attendance; it is not a coincidence, as demonstrated by different studies, that the main motivation of mothers who attend literacy programmes is their desire to learn so as to be able to help their children with homework.

A third counter-argument is that literacy work and adult education should be seen as an extraordinary economic and civic investment, more than as a question of scarce resources, since acquiring reading-writing skills remains vital for survival and social competence, despite the modernization of Latin American society; the adult new literate will have better chances of getting a job, of improving his productive capacity, of taking part in the solution of social problems and of exercising his right to political participation.

Illiteracy can therefore not be seen only in the light of rates, variables and statistical projections, and the problem cannot be faced only according to strictly economic, or efficiency, criteria. On the contrary, it is necessary to start with a recognition that it is an important part of the internal debt which our societies are bound to keep in mind and pay, and that illiteracy is not an inevitable misfortune of history, but rather a problem which can and should be solved through adequate policies and educational and socio-economic strategies.

Regional Action in the Field of Literacy

It is a well-known fact that political will and material resources are essential factors to fight illiteracy successfully, and that the State plays a decisive role in creating mechanisms to regulate the order in which social needs are met, and to transfer resources to marginal sectors. However, the problem is so complex in the present conditions of scarcity of resources, that it is necessary to seek appropriate methodological solutions, coherent organization models and qualified personnel, all starting out from the socio-economic and cultural environment of the illiterate, in order to put and end to their exclusion from education.

The history of Latin American literacy action has been characterized by errors in approaches, and by traditional strategies in the form of punctual "campaigns" which have resulted in few solid achievements and lasting educational effects; the idealism and voluntarism behind many of these campaigns were not sufficient to reach the goals and objectives set up and soon overwhelmed by a reality, which it was not easy to modify. The national literacy campaigns in Cuba (1960) and Nicaragua (1980) continue to be examples to show, through their scope, impact and success, that literacy on a national scale is possible in special socio-political circumstances of nation-wide transformation, with effects on literacy learners and teachers which go far beyond the educational aspect. There is a tendency in the region to use these successful experiences as "models" to imitate or, on the contrary, to reject forcefully. Both extremes, idealization and rejection, stem from more ideological than technical reasons; extrapolating and generalizing the Cuban and Nicaraguan experiences have often contributed to twarting the viability of literacy initiatives, making it more difficult to search solutions adapted to the reality and the possibilities of each national context.

Compared to earlier decades, this decade has been particularly rich in efforts to undertake literacy action at a national and regional scale. Mention should here be made of the impact of the Major Project in the Field of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (PPE), started in 1981, as well as many non-governmental initiatives through micro and "alternative" literacy processes.

Literacy action in the framework of this regional project substantiates Latin American States' recognition of the link between illiteracy, critical poverty and lack of political democratization. Numerous national experiences (4) have been undertaken in the context of the project, with different emphasis and approaches, in an attempt to redefine the very idea of literacy action, to recuperate positive aspects of former experiences and create new forms of cooperation between countries, and between them and organisms providing technical and financial support. Approved by representatives of Latin American states, PPE strategy is based on the recognition that elimination of illiteracy is basically the responsibility of the state, but that nothing can be achieved without active participation of the population and civil society institutions. Literacy is also clearly perceived as an enterprise with a double target: absolute illiterates, whether young or adults, who have not had access to school, and, simultaneously, literacy for children, with encouragement to primary schools to undertake literacy action more efficiently. The first target to remedy an existing situation and the second to prevent adult illiteracy.

Although progress has indeed been made, the initial results of this regional project have varied in impact on illiteracy in the different countries and are insufficient when seen against the target of universl literacy before year 2000. If the present downward trend continues, the number of illiterates will diminish by only six million by the end of the century, and there will be some 38 million illiterates left to confirm how utopical the goal was. The governing organs of the regional project have decided to place particular emphasis on evaluation and projections of national literacy programmes, so as to encourage education policies and alternative strategies which are capable of taking up the battle against illiteracy in the period 1990-2000.

Through a number of non governmental institutions (church organizations, popular education organizations, promotion centres, etc.), civil society has taken part in this literacy task, with varying degrees of autonomy and efficiency. Of particular relevance are the efforts in the field of intercultural bilingual education undertaken in Ecuador, both by the Catholic University and by the Ecuadorian Confederation of Native Nationalities; meetings and publications on literacy promoted by CELADEC; research on the learning process in mathematics teaching undertaken by Colombian NGOs; the association of literacy and civic rights among women promoted by Peruvian organizations; literacy support using mass communication means by member institutions of the Latin American Educational Broadcasting Association, as well as the Literacy Supporting Network recently created by the Latin American Adult Education Council.

With state action often lacking in initiative and efficiency, many literacy activities have seen the light among non governmental sources, often opposing government action with 'alternative' methods. They prove the traditional divorce between state and civil society, which has become even deeper because of excessive control and exclusive attitudes on the part of public agents on the one hand, and by the tendency among NGOs, on the other hand, to see public action in too homogeneous and narrow a way, and to blame the state for all the defects of an unpopular administration. While public literacy programmes have been geared to gain acceptance in the population through massive programmes controlled by the State, the NGOs act more locally, predominantly among rural populations, encourage participation in literacy activities which may affect "micro power" structures. However, with the democratization process in many Latin American countries, there is a tendency towards concertation between public and non-governmental programmes, deeply rooted notions and attitudes are changing, and former roles are revised in larger scale and more pluralistic tasks, which purposely work for social change in favour of the more marginal groups.

The results of these national and institutional initiatives cannot be measured only by the number of people who have become literate. Progress in the field of literacy is better seen in aspects such as:

- Growing collective awareness of the need for literacy in order to make education and society more democratic. Also, there is more recognition of the complexity of illiteracy: special stress is placed on planning and evaluation of literacy programmes, so as to avoid the errors of former campaigns marked by voluntarism and improvization. Literacy practice itself, and studies undertaken, clearly show that literacy is not just a problem of methods and techniques. For example, there is an evident relationship between the degree of illiteracy in Latin America and the

(4) 14 national literacy programmes have been launched in the framework of the regional project. Their conception and operating methods follow the priority set up for literacy action in different socio-political circumstances and vary according to different motivations and development models.

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influence of oral traditions, which are the heritage of indigenous cultures –with their particular ways of creating, organizing and transmitting knowledge– but which are also found in non indigenous, peasant and urban communities, and in which the learners have serious difficulties in using the written codes.

- Successful literacy action is increasingly associated with systematic efforts in post literacy and adult education, and particularly with the need to eliminate the so-called 'school failure', so as to make it possible for schoolage children to be educated in and complete school. Studies undertaken by researchers as for example Emilia Ferreiro in Mexico, Brazil and Argentina, are extremely important and can serve as the groundwork for alternative teaching methods to counteract the failure of initial literacy action by the school.
- Recognition of the correlation between illiteracy and poverty has encouraged several countries to give priority and special attention to illiteracy among population groups who experience educational precarity. There is a notable increase in projects in the field of bilingual education, intended for both indigenous children and adults and brought about by official recognition that linguistic and cultural diversity are rich values to be preserved. Bilingual literacy, however, does not give equal treatment to indigenous languages as opposed to the official, or dominant, language; this is due both to public concern to give more importance to Spanish and to the need for the native population to learn Spanish as an intercultural communication means. More and more stress is placed on literacy among women -particularly among mothers– since it directly affects child mortality rates, absenteeism and dropout rates among school children. Many mother-care and child-care programmes include literacy teaching, and educational materials often have contents addressing women as the depositories of culture and the main motor to promote education of their children.
- More thought is being given to functional illiteracy, to the regression and limitations in understanding and mastery of the written language and of mathematics, in order to face the challenge of modernization of our societies. Mention should here be made of the literacy campaign taking place in Ecuador and its masive mobilization of 70 thousand young people; it adopts technical and pedagogical methods based on the weekly distribution in the entire country of 250 thousand working documents made out on the basis of reports elaborated by non governmental research centres; they constitute up-to-date scientific position papers on the different topics of the national literacy campaign: health, housing, land property, work, the condition of the woman and of childhood, etc.
- The outcome of studies, technical meetings and regional research is gathered in numerous specialized publications providing a considerable editorial effort to facilitate a scientific treatment of illiteracy and dissemination of innovative ideas and experiences in the region.

All this is indeed valuable, especially considering that the results have been obtained in the course of a decade marked by crisis and economic recession, which have reduced the capacity of countries and of NGOs to carry out larger scale and more effective action.

International Literacy Year

1990, International Literacy Year (ILY) is at the doorstep to remind us that persisting illiteracy is one of the principal challenges of our time, and that there is a terrible contrast between an opulent world society and the need to devote more energy and effort to solve a problem, which mankind has been in a position, technically and economically, to solve for a long time. ILY will help to realize that the conquest of space, micro-processing, biotechnology, nuclear energy and the scientific and technological revolution are still insufficient and out of proportion in a world with close to 900 million illiterates.

The contradictory feeling behind the proclamation of ILY ought to make it possible to renew efforts, in the world and in Latin America, to overcome illiteracy and also to associate literacy with the ideals of peace, democratization of our societies and of observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Indeed, the world cannot expect to know peace and stability while immense numbers of men and women remain confined in ignorance and misery; if the world truly desires peace, then the incredible sums spent on armament would have to be used for other purposes, such as literacy and education of adults and children. It is totally irrational that industrialized countries spend twenty times more on military purposes than on assistance to the Third World, and that military spending in the poorest countries is a third higher than public education budgets and

correspond to three times the spending on health.

1990 should therefore be the beginning of a conscious and daring collective action. As Paulo Freire puts it: "A dosis of folly is absolutely fundamental in the pedagogy of indignation", the indignation we feel when we analyze the situation today.

!LY is an opportunity for a serious and rigorous review by those who promote and support literacy action. It is an opportunity to do away with improvization, to approach the teaching-learning process with illiterate children and adults with scientific and pedagogical competence. It is an opportunity to strive for more successful and efficient literacy action based on participation of the illiterate themselves, who then become education subjetcs fully aware of the need for a personal commitment on their part. Briefly, it constitutes a conjucture which is propicious for reflection and solidary action.

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PRIMARY SCHOOLING AND ILLITERACY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: 1980 - 1987

Ernesto Schiefelbein, Juan Carlos Tedesco, Rafael Ruiz de Lira and Sonia Peruzzi (*)

The information contained in country reports and the agreements reached by the ministers of education at their 1989 meeting(1) show that the three goals of the Major Project in the Field of Education are still relevant. Reaffirmation of these goals ten years after they were originally set shows just how wise and timely the countries' agreement to implement the Major Project was; but it also proves that the obstacles, worsened by the economic crisis, are more than just symptoms of a temporary situation. Indeed, the obstacles are part and parcel of the actual setting in which the activities undertaken to meet the goals of the Major Project will take place over the next few years.

Despite these difficulties, the countries have succeeded, to varying degrees, in making headway in the Major Project's three main goals: universal primary schooling, universal literacy and quality in education. Most countries have matched the demand for primary schooling in all social sectors, despite an apparently slow growth in enrollment and access has been extended to include isolated groups in rural areas which used to be excluded from the system. In 19 of the 25 countries on which information is available, over 95% of the population of a single age category (usually 8 or 9) is enrolled in primary school.

Progress has also been made in the area of literacy, but further efforts are required if that goal is to be met. The number of absolute illiterates - i.e., individuals who define themselves as illiterate in a population census in the region - decreased for the first time (illiterate individuals now represent a little over 15% of the population over the age of 15). Nevertheless, the region still faces a serious problem: there are still 42.6 million absolute illiterates and a high number of functionally illiterate individuals who have received literacy training or consider themselves literate and yet remain unable to make minimal use of reading, writing or arithmetic in their daily lives. The problem is especially serious because it is concentrated in five countries, among indigenous populations in four other countries, and among people over 40 in almost all of Latin America.

Despite growing efforts by the countries to tackle the quality issues through different strategies, the indicators available on the quality of primary education suggest serious problems in most of the education systems in the region, affecting students from the most vulnerable population groups to a greater degree. In fact, direct indicators such as the high incidence of repetition and low academic achievement detected in a few countries in the region as compared to those in developed countries, or on the part of rural students as compared to their urban counterparts, indicate serious problems with the quality of education. Indirect indicators, which measure factors which appear to affect academic achievement,

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(1) Third Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Major Project, held in Guatemala City, June 26 to 30, 1989

confirm this. Teachers' relatively low salaries, the short school year, the fact that many students do not have textbooks, the poor physical condition of many schools and the high rate of seasonal absenteeism and temporary dropout all indicate problems with the quality of primary education.

This analysis of primary schooling and literacy levels in four sub-regions of Latin America and the Caribbean is based on the reports by 37 countries for 1986-1987. Emphasis has been put on describing aspects related to the three goals of the Major Project(2). In some cases, other sources of information were used in order to include important data, in which case, the source has been indicated. All of this information has made it possible to compare, wherever possible, the 1986-1987 situation to that of 1980, when the Major Project was initiated. It is important to bear in mind that we now have better information and that some progress may be due to the fact that we now have greater knowledge of the efforts underway in the different countries in the field of education.

Education policies and the goals of the Major Project in the field of education

Despite the heterogeneity of the region and of each country within it, the country education policies concur on the need to continue working towards the goals of the Major Project: *to assure a minimum of eight years of general education; to eradicate absolute illiteracy and develop adult education services and to improve the quality and effectiveness of education systems.* The reaffirmation of these goals ten years after they were set shows the wisdom and timeliness of the Major Project.

Regional education policy

Renewed interest on the part of the countries in continuing to work towards the three main goals of the Major Project is due, in part, to growing limitations and difficulties, especially economic ones, the progress made in the field of education over the last decade and the positive trends in other aspects of life in the region. At the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of the Major Project: (Guatemala, June 26 to 30, 1989), national representatives examined the efforts carried out by each country - their achievements and limitations are described in detail below - and confirmed the need to comply with the agreement signed in the Mexico declaration of 1979, later reiterated at the Bogotá meetings of 1987. It is also important to point out that at the meeting of the Group of 8 held in Punta del Este in October 1988, the presidents agreed to use the Major Project as a framework for implementing activities of regional cooperation in the field of education.

In confirming their commitment to the Major Project, country representatives took into account the social and financial implications of the present economic crisis in the region including the deterioration of income levels, increased inequality in its distribution, increased unemployment and underemployment, the persistence of poverty in rural areas and its worsening in marginal urban areas. In terms of funding problems, the reduction in social spending - estimated at 25% over the last decade by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean Region (CEPAL) - and its negative impact on teachers' salaries, appear to play a major role. It is also obvious that the situation of the more marginal sectors tends to worsen, given their inability to organize themselves and effectively express their needs in education and the social area.

In agreeing to keep working towards the goals of the Major Project, several positive trends in coping with the effects of the crisis and the role of education in reinforcing those trends, were taken into account. Among the most significant were the progressive consolidation of democratic forms of government , the growing revalorization of the role of education in promoting social participation, the construction of a democratic society with emphasis on solidarity, the protection of human rights and renewed efforts aimed at integration and cooperation among countries in facing common problems.

Country representatives emphasized four aspects that should be taken into account in designing activities in order to continue working towards the goals of the Major Project: *the urgent need to make decisions with intermediate- and long-term effects; the need to counter problems in education with strategies that can ensure inter-sectoral articulation (at both a national level and that of international cooperation); the need to improve methods, structures, content and procedures employed by education systems, since increased financial resources are a*

(2) The first volume on "The State of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean", covering the period from 1980 to 1986, was published by OREALC-Unesco in November 1988. A second volume, containing information covering the period up to 1987, is expected to be published in 1990.

Table 1

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN;
ESTIMATE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION EXPENDITURES

	Total (millions of dollars)	Percentage of the GNP	Public expenditure per inhabitant
Latin America and the Caribbean			
1975	13 477	3.5	43
1980	31 397	3.9	88
1985	25 392	3.8	63
1986	24 701	3.5	60
Developed countries			
1975	289 684	6.0	270
1980	525 271	6.0	471
1985	585 349	6.0	508
1986	688 001	5.8	595
Developing countries			
1975	40 433	3.6	14
1980	93 384	3.9	29
1985	95 846	4.1	27
1986	98 413	4.0	27

Source: Unesco. Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988.

prerequisite but not enough in themselves to achieve the goals set, and the need for firm political will in order to implement the measures required, on the basis of broad national consensus in the field of education concerning the goals of the Major Project(3).

National education policies

The political will to achieve the goals of the Major Project over the coming decade is manifest in the plans and accomplishments described in the national reports presented at the Guatemala meeting. The reports show that these goals are part of the countries' basic legislation or their priorities as defined in the national plans for action in education developed for short- or mid-term implementation. The reports also show that there have been significant achievements despite the economic crisis and other adverse conditions in the countries concerned over this period.

The impact of the economic crisis reflected in the reduction in the levels of per capita gross national product and elsewhere, is magnified in the case of education by a reduction of the GNP allocated for this sector. ECLAC estimates that in 15 out of the 19 countries in Latin America and in 3 of the 4 English-speaking Caribbean countries, the 1987 GNP per capita was lower than it had been in 1980. In 1985, every country except Panama had a lower GNP per capita than in 1980. At the same time, the percentage of the GNP earmarked for education in 1987 was less than in 1980 in 18 of the countries in which the GNP had been reduced. There is no doubt that in relative terms, the crisis has affected education in Latin America and the Caribbean more than it has in other regions. While in Latin America and the Caribbean "public spending earmarked for education per inhabitant" dropped from 88 US$ to 60 US$ between 1980 and 1986, the figure only dropped from 29 US$ to 27 US$ in developing countries as a whole (Table 1). This is reflected, naturally, by a drop in the percentage of the GNP earmarked for education (from 3.9 in 1980 to 3.5 in 1986).

Despite these major financial restrictions and other serious social problems, there was an increment in enrollment during the 1980-1987 period at every level of education in the countries of the region and the number of literate individuals in the population increased (as self-reported in population censuses) but there was an increment in repetition as well. Increased enrollment is especially significant at the pre-school level where, in 1986, it represented 15% of the 0-5 population (Table 2) after growing 10.4% per year over the

(3) Bulletin of the Major Project in Latin America and the Caribbean. No. 19, August 1989; p. 19-20

Table 2

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: ESTIMATED ENROLLMENT AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATIOS

(In thousands and percentages)

Level	1980	1985	1986	Annual growth rate 1980-86
Pre-School Education				
Enrollment	4 750	7 879	8 619	10.4
Enrollment ratio[a]	7.9	12.3	15.0	
Primary Education				
Number of students	64 799	69 592	71 419	1.6
Net school enrollment ratio (6-to-11 population)	82.0	83.5	85.0	
Gross school enrollment ratio	105.8	106.1	107.3	
Secondary Education				
Number of students	17 605	21 340	22 054	3.8
Net school enrollment ratio (12-to-17 population)[b]	63.2	70.5		
Gross school enrollment ratio	43.5	50.8	51.6	

Source: Unesco. Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988.

[a] Enrollment as percentage of the total 0-to-5 population estimated by Celade. (Boletin Demográfico No. 38, July 1986).

[b] Includes primary and secondary students.

1980-1986 period. Enrollment at the primary level increased in almost every country (except for two in which all children who reached school age were already enrolled), and this is reflected in the continued increase in the net schooling rate - up to 85% of the 6-11 years old population while teachers' workloads have not been increased (Table 3). Among some single ages (usually the 9 or 10-year old group), the rate is over 90%. In other words, in most of the countries, almost all of every new single age group eventually enrolls, laying the groundwork for beating absolute illiteracy in future generations.

The enrollment of almost all young people who reach school age and the prevention of an increase in the number of absolute illiterates among older age groups has meant, to a great extent, that an increase in illiteracy (as self-reported in population censuses) has been prevented in most of the countries. This achievement is reflected in a slight decrease in the number of absolute illiterates despite an increase in the population over the last decade. There remains, however, much to be done in five or six countries in order to succeed in reducing absolute illiteracy by at least 10 or 5% by the end of the century (Table 4). And a new stage - defined as functional illiteracy - is beginning.

In order to carry out this new stage of the fight against illiteracy and reduce the high levels of repetition observed in the region, it is necessary to improve the quality and relevance of education. The difference between the gross and net schooling rates suggests a 20% repetition average at the primary level which, according to all the available research, is much higher in first grade. Thus far, efforts to improve the quality of education have been concentrated on pilot projects which might generate massive results at a later date (except for the massive Escuela Nueva experiment in Colombia).

The increment in enrollment, when coupled with reduced financial resources, can only be explained in terms of lower salaries for teachers, reduced resources for textbooks and other didactic material, an increase in students attending private school (even when their share of overall enrollment is constant or slightly reduced) or by greater efficiency in the

Table 3

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
ESTIMATED TEACHING STAFF AND TEACHER/STUDENT RATIO

Level	1980	1985	1986	Annual growth rate 1980-86
Pre-School Education				
Total number of teachers (thousands)	177	301	343	11.7
Number of students per teacher	27	26	25	
Primary Education				
Total number of teachers (thousands)	2 234	2 566	2 620	2.7
Number of students per teacher	29	27	27	
Secondary Education				
Total number of teachers (thousands)	1 108	1 377	1 432	4.4
Number of students per teacher	16	15	15	

Source: Unesco. Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988.
Note: These figures are slightly different from those provided by the countries in tables 6 and 15.

Table 4

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ABSOLUTE ILLITERATES AGED 15 AND OVER
(Absolute figures expressed in thousands)

Sub-regions	1987			2000		
	Population	Illiterates	Rate	Population	Illiterates	Rate
South America						
Brazil	90 593	19 596	21.6	122 499	18 288	14.9
Remaining countries	87 047	8 979	10.3	116 916	7.906	6.8
Central America and Panama	14 896	4 289	28.8	22 454	4 242	18.9
Gulf of Mexico	65 821	9 845	15.0	91 559	8 845	9.7
English-speaking Caribbean	3 514	75	2.1	3 514	75	2.1
Region	261 871	42 784	16.3	356 942	39 356	11.0

Source: Table 20.
Note: Estimates based on a study of cohorts with the latest population census figures available. In the case of the English-speaking Caribbean, the 1987 figures were maintained for the year 2000; this sub-region includes the following countries: Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, the British Virgin Islands, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

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use of resources. The number of teachers in the region has increased (Table 3) and their income levels have been reduced (except in two countries): this affects the present and future operations of schools and translates into an immediate exodus of teachers (probably the best) towards other sectors of activities. On a mid- and long-term basis, it will become more difficult to recruit new students interested in becoming teachers and students not admitted to other areas of higher learning will continue to be accepted as students in the field of education(4). The problem generated by teachers' salaries has further negative effects on the quality of education given the fact that resources for textbooks, equipment and other materials to complement the teacher's work are reduced as well. As for the increase in enrollment in private schools, the greatest impact is at the level of higher education where, in three countries, the number of students in private post-secondary institutions exceeds that of students in public institutions(5). And, finally, there does not appear to be greater efficiency in the use of resources, since the regional repetition levels have remained constant and the number of students per teacher has decreased at the primary level (from 29 students per teacher in 1980 to 27 in 1986), the pre-school and the secondary levels (Table 3). This last fact indicates that there has been a tendency to reduce teachers' salaries so that teachers have a reduced workload, despite the fact that research has shown that a reduced workload does not produce improved academic achievement on the part of students when traditional pedagogical methods (which predominate in the region) are used.

Lack of resources has triggered interest in improving the management and efficiency of educational systems, either through better information or decentralization of the educational process. Several countries have created Management Information Systems (MIS) and others are involved in similar processes. At least four countries are measuring the quality of academic achievement at different levels of primary and secondary schooling. At the present time, information (both what is obtained by on-going statistics and the results of research) is beginning to be used to improve decision-making and follow-up in management processes in education systems. This is an area in which horizontal cooperation might facilitate progress in the management of education in the region.

The critical state of national public finances and the resulting internal and external incentives for reducing social spending, have led educational managers to better prepare themselves for fighting the competition from other sectors for the available resources. In order to do so, they have attempted to accurately document the contribution of education to economic growth and social equity. In this way they hope to obtain a significant share of the limited national resources available and attract additional resources from the public and private sectors and external sources.

Decentralization is one of the policies which the countries have relied on in order to achieve greater efficiency but there is still a lot of confusion about methods for implementing it. Nearly a dozen countries have implemented decentralization (with transfers of resources and decisions) or deconcentration (with delegation of functions) of educational management, be it at the provincial, departmental or state level or at the level of smaller units such as municipalities, counties or "circuitos". After several decades of toying with the idea of decentralization, the countries moved into action over recent years. Thus new, often makeshift, forms of channeling resources, ways for the people concerned to participate in the educational process and procedures for channelling basic information necessary for rational participation in decisions which affect that process have all been initiated. Pedagogical conventions and meetings of researchers and authorities also provide important opportunities for participation. The Major Project is helping countries to exchange experience in a systematic way and seminars have been organized among the countries which have made the most headway on these policies(6).

External restrictions, the pressure to increase internal efficiency and the positive results obtained thus far through horizontal cooperation have encouraged the pursuit of mechanisms for joint action in the region. The

(4) Further comments appear below under "Training of Teachers and Educational Agents."

(5) Further comments on the private sector appear below under "Primary Education by Sector and Area".

(6) REPLAD attended an inter-agency meeting on Decentralization and Deconcentration of Public Policy held in Brasilia, Brazil, in October 1989.

three networks specialized in training and research (REPLAD in planning and administration, REDALF in literacy training and adult education and PICPEMCE in innovation and training for educators) and the Regional Information System (SIRI) set up as part of the Major Project, are getting increased support among the countries. Many initiatives, both official and private, have been undertaken in order to develop further horizontal links among the governments of the area, among non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and between both kinds of institutions. It is likely that this type of initiative will be reinforced by the recommendation from the Guatemala meeting to intensify horizontal cooperation.

In summary, the countries have used national and international mechanisms, especially the opportunities created by the Major Project, to define strategies and policies consistent with the three goals of the Major Project. At the same time, they have stressed their desire to continue collaborating on a regional basis, despite the considerable restrictions generated by the foreign debt in Latin America and the drop in prices of Caribbean countries' main exports.

Expansion of schooling. Progress, achievements and problems

Three important achievements and three serious problems in achieving the first goal of the Major Project - that of providing complete and universal primary education in the region to at least eighth grade - can be observed. The achievements include *an increase in pre-school education, quasi-universal access to primary education and regular attendance for five or more years in the education system.* Three major problems were encountered: *high rates of temporary dropout which reduces the time each student attends school during each academic year, the high rate of repetition (difficult to detect with traditional methods of statistics-gathering), and the more difficult task involved in enrolling and teaching children who remain unassimilated into the education system (from 3 to 15%, depending on the country) either because they live in remote areas or because they have serious learning disabilities.*

The following sections provide a close look at the state of pre-school, primary and special education. The present situation is described in each case as well as the kinds of policies promoted by the countries in order to further develop each level of education.

Pre-school education

The percentage of children between the ages of 0 and 5 attending pre-school grew from 7.9% in 1980 to 15% in 1986 (Table 2). This significant growth is due to both pressure from a growing number of working mothers who rely on social support for child care and an attempt to reduce the number of repetitions in primary school. Demographic factors have influenced this rapid growth as well. Many countries are integrating pre-school (kindergarten and pre-kindergarten) courses into primary schools where reduced population growth rates or depopulating areas free up space in initial courses. This strategy is particularly important because it implies enrolling additional students in pre-school education with the same overall resources provided for general primary education. Insofar as pre-school education only covers a small fraction of the population, it is important to observe its effect on equal opportunity.

Characteristics of pre-school education

Pre-school education is mainly delivered to older children. Two-thirds of 5-year olds and over a quarter of 3 and 4-year olds attend school. Almost all Anglophone Caribbean countries have made school compulsory for 5-year olds. Health and early childhood stimulation programmes are concentrated on children under three whereas programmes provided for mothers and families, community development and overall services for children (with education and health components) cover all ages at that level.

The Anglophone Caribbean countries along with Cuba, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay have rates of school attendance of over 15% of the 0-to-5 population and Brazil and Costa Rica are approaching the same percentage (Table 5). The increase from 1980 to 1987 was especially rapid in the cases of Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic.

One fourth of pre-school attendance in the region is private and in many Caribbean countries almost all of it is (Table 5), although it is government-subsidized. In all the countries except the English-speaking Caribbean, private attendance in the rural sector is less than half what it is in the urban sector (the average is an eighth). The student/teacher ratio tends to be lower in the private sector than in the public sector but this trend is not as pronounced in rural areas (Table 6). In any case, there are no noticeable differences in student/teacher ratios between the two sectors except in three countries.

Attendance is concentrated in urban areas, as shown in the selectivity index

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Table 5

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: FORMAL PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION EVOLUTION OF GROSS SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATES

	Years	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
		Brazil[a]	Remaining countries				
Population from 0 to 5[b]	1980	21 994 879	18 973 413	4 702 689	15 717 392	739 137	62 127 510
	1985	23 618 510	20 346 545	5 061 228	15 386 688	757 318	65 170 289
	1987	21 747 929	20 685 960[c]	5 215 193	15 403 513	759 839	63 812 434[c]
Enrollment[d]	1980	1 544 000	1 909 807	223 492	1 311 399	194 159	5 182 857
	1985	2 466 122	2 563 517	309 780	2 649 528	196 951	8 185 898
	1987	2 907 290	2 923 697	370 594	2 991 283	206 757	9 399 621
Percentage in private schools							
Total	1987	37.0	26.0	33.5	9.6	78.5	25.0
Urban area	1987	38.2	29.8	35.5	9.7	57.6	27.8
Rural area	1987	14.1	4.1	14.2	0.0	49.3	3.3
Rate of school attendance							
	1980	7.0	10.1	4.8	8.3	26.3	8.3
	1985	10.4	12.6	6.1	17.2	26.0	12.6
	1987	13.4	14.1	7.1	19.4	27.2	14.7

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987; Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988; CELADE: Boletin Demográfico No. 38. Santiago, July 1986; 1980-81 Population Census Commonwealth Caribbean.

[a] Corresponding to the 0-to-6 age group, 1986.
[b] Population figures for the English-speaking Caribbean do not include data from Antigua, Barbados, the Netherlands Antilles and Bahama.
[c] The figures for Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela are from 1986 so that they are comparable to the figures for enrollment.
[d] In the case of countries without information, enrollment for the most recent year was used in the total, except in the case of the Bahama, for which no pertinent information was available.

Table 6

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION. NUMBER OF TEACHING POSITIONS AND SCHOOLS

	Years	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
		Brazil[a]	Remaining countries				
Teaching positions[b]	1980	58 788	64 601	5 811	47 524	6 375	183 099
	1985	97 203	97 579	9 095	105 090	6 141	315 108
	1987	126 322	111 835	13 750	121 336	13 608	386 851
Students per teacher	1980	26	30	38	28	30	28
	1985	25	26	34	25	32	26
	1987	23	26	27	25	15	24
Students per teacher, Private sector[c]	1987	18	21	22	25	22	20
Schools[b]	1980	15 320	19 205	2 662	14 298	2 489	53 974
	1985	32 270	29 652	6 143	37 136	2 888	108 089
	1987	42 966	34 841	7 041	42 954	3 019	130 821
Students per school	1980	101	99	84	92	78	96
	1985	76	86	50	71	68	76
	1987	68	84	53	70	68	72
Students per school, Private sector[d]	1987	93	76	59	74	52	80

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey,1987; Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988;

[a] 1986
[b] In the case of countries without information, the most recent enrollment figures were used in the total, except in the case of the Bahama, for which no pertinent information was available.
[c] Does not include data from Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, Haiti, Dominican Republic.
[d] Includes neither the countries mentioned in [c] nor St. Kitts and Nevis.

Table 7

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION STUDENTS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, 1987

	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
	Brazil [a]	Remaining countries				
Students[b]						
Urban areas	2 761 926	1 620 419	289 964	1 888 942	23 460	6 584 711
Rural areas	145 364	459 674	57 929	860 244	23 258	1 546 469
Students in rural areas as a percentage of the total	5	22	16	31	50	19
Percentage of rural population	27	31	56	31	50[c]	31
Inequality index	0.2	0.7	0.3	1.0	1.0	0.6
Students per teacher[d]						
Urban areas						
Total	23	29	29	32	14	27
Private	18	21	24	25	14	20
Rural areas						
Total	23	48	15	24	22	26
Private	24	20	18	0	22	21
Students per school[d]						
Urban areas						
Total	74	108	79	109	104	89
Private	93	76	66	74	67	84
Rural areas						
Total	26	57	31	36	54	37
Private	66	22	23	0	43	33

Source: Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988; SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987.

[a] 1986.

[b] Due to a lack of information, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Haiti are not included. For the English-speaking Caribbean, information is only available on Dominica, Guyana, St. Kitts and Nevis and Suriname.

[c] Estimated to be similar to the percentage of students in rural areas given that most children attend school.

[d] Due to a lack of data, neither the countries mentioned in b) nor Cuba, Haiti or the Dominican Republic for the total nor Costa Rica for the private sector are included. In the case of the English-speaking Caribbean, data on students per teacher covers Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis and Suriname. Information on students per institution corresponds to Dominica and Suriname.

obtained by comparing the percentage of attendance to the percentage of rural population, except in the cases of Mexico and Venezuela where the state has made special efforts to ensure a more homogeneous distribution (Table 7). The availability of pre-school education favours middle and upper sectors of the population despite certain headway made in attendance in marginal areas through non-formal programmes. The use of the mass media to stimulate interest among parents and the community in general usually tends to favour middle-class families from urban areas but can also encourage non-formal programmes which involve the community.

Pre-school educational institutions tend to be small, which might account for higher costs except in the case of non-formal programmes (Table 6). Except for Cuba and Chile, all of the countries have an average of less than 100 children per institution; in six countries, the average is close to or less than 50. Private institutions tend to be smaller because a growing proportion of private efforts are through non-formal programmes of a diversified and disperse nature.

Innovation and alternatives in pre-school education

Innovative elements have been introduced into course design in over half of the countries. Emphasis on the overall development of the child, techniques and methodologies centered on the needs of the child and activities which zero in at the community level are being increasingly implemented in pre-school courses. But this progress has in turn generated a growing gap between the pre-school and primary levels, except in a few countries which have considerably improved the quality of primary education, such as the

Escuela Nueva programme in Colombia. Renewed emphasis on the problem of quality in primary education will doubtlessly resolve this problem.

Economic restrictions have led to highly interesting and creative alternatives in pre-school education. In several countries, primary school teachers have been provided with training as monitors in charge of pre-school programmes, especially in marginal areas. Elsewhere, programmes have been initiated to integrate educational and social activities into the community, including a parents' training component. In one such programme, mothers get training on basic health and education principles in order to work with children in the 3-to-6 group. In several countries, efforts have been focussed on qualitative improvements in teacher training programmes, reformulation of curricular programmes, the production of new material and selected research projects.

The Major Project has stimulated systematic exchange of experience with legislation, design and implementation of education programmes and overall care of children in the 0-to-5 age bracket (including health, nutrition, social skills and early childhood stimulation). And yet it is difficult to compare programmes with limited coverage and different types of educational agents, which develop as experience is gained along the way and which are neither evaluated nor possible to recreate because no clear and complete description of the programme has been prepared beforehand(7). In any case, over the last two years, different policies have been implemented to overcome the difficulties involved in the exchange of experience. They include an inventory of 360 non-formal programmes, as part of the Unicef/Unesco Cooperation Programme; documentation at a regional level has been compiled and processed in collaboration with REDUC; the organization of information networks at the national level and exchange of materials have been encouraged and guides for producing didactic resources have been published.

In summary, the rapid expansion of pre-school education has been one of the most important changes in the education sector in the countries of the region over the last decade. The growth in attendance rates, especially among the 5-to-6-year old population, is a significant achievement. Problems persist, however, such as the high percentage of children who have not been incorporated; the concentration of availability in urban areas; the significant differences in the quality of services provided on the basis of economic strata and the training and remuneration of educational agents and, lastly, the disparity of pedagogical approaches which leads to difficulties in students' adjustment in their transition to the primary level.

Primary education

Countries have responded to the growing demand for general basic schooling in all social sectors despite an apparently slow growth in enrollment, by extending access to isolated groups in rural areas which had thus far remained excluded from the system. In 19 countries out of the 25 which have information, over 95% of the population of a single age group is enrolled in primary education, usually the 9 or 10-year old age group (Table 8). Since this percentage only reflects the number of students enrolled in a specific school year, and other students of this same age group may have been enrolled in previous years (and then dropped out), it is an indicator of the minimum level of a cohort's "access" (at least that percentage of the single age group of the corresponding population has been enrolled). Of the remaining six countries, access is close to or over 90% in half of them and ranges from 75 to 80% of the single age group in the other half. These figures (despite a few inconsistencies in the data for a couple of countries which do not affect the trends referred to in this paragraph(8) indicate that the problem of access to basic general education tends to have been overcome in the region, despite the economic restrictions under which the systems operate.

Access to primary education is now universal in more developed countries and in urban areas of lesser developed countries; but

(7) Mora, J., G. Calvo and E. Toro, "Por que es fundamental la transición de la educación inicial a la primaria", regional workshop held in Paipa, Colombia, April 25-29, 1988, Unicef-Unesco with the Ministry of Education of Colombia, 1988.

(8) In some countries, the school population obtained from census data or household surveys may be underestimated or, perhaps, enrollment has been overestimated. There are also traditional biases in this type of data. There is a tendency, for example, to round off ages, so there may be percentages over 100 for certain ages when the bias of the total population is corrected and the enrollment figure is not..

Cuadro 8

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: POPULATION AND ENROLLMENT RATES BY SINGLE AGES IN BASIC EDUCATION, 1987

Age (in years)	Population by single age[a]	Total region[a]	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean
			Brazil[b]	Remaining countries			
6	8 843 010	55.0	21.2	68.3	42.3	90.9	90.2
7	8 780 656	86.1	73.6	92.2	80.8	99.2	97.0
8	8 637 546	91.6	83.9	94.1	85.1	100.0	96.9
9	8 427 466	93.3	88.0	95.6	84.0	100.0	98.4
10	8 674 819	84.4	54.1	91.2	84.7	100.0	100.0
11	8 366 927	87.7	81.6	93.0	79.9	92.3	89.4
12	8 505 755	82.4	77.0	85.7	76.8	86.7	95.9
13	8 311 207	75.1	72.4	78.2	65.1	76.2	92.4
14	8 408 966	64.9	59.5	70.1	53.0	67.8	85.5
15	6 356 853	45.2	49.3	47.0	39.3	27.6	32.0
Access to school[c] (minimum estimate)		93.3	88.0	95.6	85.1	100.0	100.0
Age at which dropout begins[d]		13	10 and 13	10	14	14	15

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987; CELADE. Population estimates by single age. 1987.

[a] Twenty-five countries of the region have been taken into account. In the case of 3 countries (Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis and Trinidad and Tobago), only the 6-to-11-year old group was taken into account.

[b] 1986.

[c] The highest percentage of students enrolled in an age group in a specific year corresponds to the minimum estimated access to school for that age group, given that some underage students who enter may have dropped out in the past.

[d] Point at which over 15% of maximum access drop out.

certain limitations persist in rural areas, extremely poor areas and among indigenous groups. These conclusions may appear contradictory in terms of the slow growth in enrollment - just 1.6% per year - (Table 2), but that growth is calculated on the basis of total volume of students enrolled and, therefore, an analysis must take into account changes in population growth rates (2.2% for the total population of the region(9), but only 1% for lower ages, as seen in Table 8), the point at which students drop out and the speed with which students are promoted from one grade to another . The following paragraphs present an analysis of primary students' attendance and progress.

Access, attendance and dropout

Although students remain enrolled in the basic education system for a regional average of five or more years, late entry and early dropout mean that the net schooling rate (the average of five or more single age groups) is much lower than the (minimal) level of access referred to above. Dropout begins, in most of the countries, at the age of 13 (Table 8), although temporary dropout (due to seasonal absenteeism) begins in the initial grades on a massive scale and leads to high repetition rates later on. Given the ages at which dropout occurs and the fact that most children enter school at the age of 7 or 8, it may be concluded that students appear enrolled in the school system for at least 5 or 6 years, even when there is partial attendance due to seasonal absenteeism (many students drop out temporarily) during the school year. It is important to note that late entry implies a reduction of the total number of years during which students remain in the system, insofar as dropout is determined by the age at which they begin to work.

Even where parents are very interested in educating their children, there are limitations to the demand for education (some of them

(9) CELADE, Boletín Demográfico, Vol. XXII, No. 43, Santiago de Chile, January 1989.

Table 9

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: POPULATION, ENROLLMENT AND NET SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATE, 1987

	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
	Brazil	Remaining countries				
Population of primary-school age[a][b]	26 982 861	19 248 369	4 718 444	15 614 064	735 606	67 299 344
Enrollment at primary-school age[c]	20 883 717	17 717 471	2 669 198	15 285 078	713 411	57 268 875
Net school enrollment ratio[d]	77.4	92.0	79.8	94.7	96.0	84.6
Rate of access to school (Minimum estimate)	88.0	95.6	85.1	100.0	100.0	93.3
Late entry and early dropout (Rate of access to school - net school ratio)	10.6	3.6	5.3	5.3	4.0	8.7

Source: Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988; SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987; CELADE Population estimate, 1987.

[a] The figures correspond to the population in the primary education age group in each country.
[b] Nine English-speaking Caribbean countries are not included.
[c] Peru, Guatemala and seven English-speaking Caribbean countries are not included.
[d] Rates are weighted averages. Countries without information have not been included.

interrelated to the quality of the supply of education) which are partially responsible for preventing complete primary schooling from becoming universal in the region. Approximately 9% of students in Central America and South America enter primary school late or eventually drop out before the age of 13. That percentage is estimated by comparing the net schooling rates for the primary school age group with the rate of access (minimum estimation) of each cohort (Table 9).

The net schooling rates by sub-region range from 80% in the case of Central America and Brazil to over 90% in the other three sub-regions. Although early dropout appears to be associated with several causes, late entry might be solved through public campaigns encouraging timely registration, or through other incentives such as school meal programmes, transportation and school supplies. Early dropout appears to be associated with: economic and work pressures (which also influence seasonal absenteeism or temporary dropout); reaching the legal age for entering the work force; multiple repetition at school; and finishing the last grade available at an incomplete rural school. Although the first two causes are partially exogenous to the education sector, education that is culturally and socioeconomically more relevant might reduce the influence of economic pressure on dropout or facilitate amendments to the legislation on the minimum age for entering the work force. The other two causes might be controlled through improvements in the quality of education in order to reduce repetition, or through multigrade schools which have proven an excellent solution when run with adequate technology (see comments on technology by sector below). It is thus possible to conclude that from the point of view of demand, the problem of the universalization of complete primary education is, to a great extent, a problem in terms of the quality of education. In other words, achieving timely entry and a reduction of dropout would depend on a proper selection of pedagogical techniques. In any event, further research is needed into the characteristics of the demand and the different factors (including ethnic and cultural factors) which affect it.

Repetition: the scale of the problem

Although the capacity of the educational supply does not appear to be a limitation to universalization of primary education, it is necessary to make better use of the available capacity in order to reach the first goal of the Major Project. The gross schooling rates provide enough information to study the capacity and efficiency of the supply of primary education. On one hand, the fact that these rates are higher than 100% (except in 7 countries)

Table 10

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: GROSS AND NET PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT RATIOS

	Years	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean[a]	Total[b]
		Brazil	Remaining countries				
Gross rates	1980	99	111	85	113	102	106
	1985	101	110	86	116	103	106
	1987	95	112	90	117	106	107
Net rates	1980	81	79	69	90	94	82
	1985	82	88	72	93	94	84
	1987	77	91	75	93	96	85
Difference	1980	18	33	15	23	8	24
	1985	19	22	14	23	9	22
	1987	18	20	15	31	10	22

Source: Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988; SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987; CELADE: estimated population figures by single age.

[a] Gross and net rates reported by: Aruba, Barbados, Dominica, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

[b] Figures for 1980 and 1985 are quoted from the Statistical Yearbook 1988; rates correspond to the 6-to-11-year old age group.

indicates that the supply of education systems is large enough to satisfy almost the entire population of the corresponding school age. On the other hand, the differences in size of net and gross schooling rates suggest the existence of high levels of repetition in most countries in the region (the difference exceeds 10% in 20 of the 25 countries for which data is available and Table 10 shows an average of 22%).

Indeed, although this difference may be traced to three causes (late entry, underage students and repeaters), it can most often be attributed to repeaters. We mentioned earlier that most students enroll in school at the appropriate age (Table 8). It is also evident that the proportion of students younger than the required age is small - only 3.8% in the first three grades (Table 11). But the phenomenon of overage students, closely associated with the problem of repetition (including, as repeaters, temporary dropouts who enroll once again in the same grade the following year) exceeds 20% in 12 of the 14 Latin American countries for which information is available, for an average of 34.8% (Table 11), with higher percentages in rural areas in every country except one.

The information provided by the gross schooling rates indicates that if students do not reach higher levels of schooling, it is due entirely to high levels of repetition. In other words, from the point of view of the educational supply, there are also problems related to quality which prevent universal primary education.

Repetition rates which, according to statistical forms filled out by school principals, are as high as 1 out of 4 in many grades (Table 12), are probably even higher since it would appear that the problem is under-estimated in most of the countries(10). A comparison, in each country, of the repetition rate (based on the average data reported by school principals) with the difference between the gross and net rates of schooling is an early warning against a possible underestimate of the real rate of repetition (Table 12).

(10) A review of findings of research on repetition leads to similar conclusions. See the "Bulletin of the Major Project in the Field of Education", No. 18, p. 7-30, OREALC-Major Project, April 1989.

Table 11

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRIMARY EDUCATION. DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN INITIAL THREE GRADES, ACCORDING TO AGE OF STUDENTS IN RELATION TO NORMAL AGE FOR ATTENDING EACH GRADE[a], 1987

	South America[b]		Central America and Panama[c]	Gulf of Mexico[d]	English-speaking Caribbean[e]	Total
	Brazil	Remaining countries				
First grade						
Enrollment	7 008 806	2 942 880	863 676	3 570 832	72 794	14 458 988
Percentage overage	39.0	29.0	26.9	17.7	4.5	30.8
Percentage underage	10.4	1.3	8.5	2.1	1.9	6.3
Second grade						
Enrollment	4 639 855	2 323 391	581 011	2 980 439	69 949	10 594 645
Percentage overage	45.2	35.2	36.0	23.8	7.2	36.2
Percentage underage	8.5	4.8	11.2	4.9	4.1	6.8
Third grade						
Enrollment	3 482 035	2 088 503	475 941	2 762 620	80 467	8 889 566
Percentage overage	47.4	36.2	36.9	21.3	21.3	36.3
Percentage underage	8.4	5.2	11.5	12.0	4.0	8.9
Total						
Enrollment	15 130 696	7 354 774	1 920 630	9 313 991	223 210	33 943 199
Percentage overage	42.9	33.6	32.1	20.7	11.4	34.0
Percentage underage	9.4	3.5	10.0	5.9	3.4	7.1

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey,1987; Unesco, Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988;

[a] The official age for enrollment in a grade and the following ages were considered as normal age.
[b] Does not include Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.
[c] Does not include Guatemala.
[d] Does not include Haiti.
[e] Corresponds to Aruba, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica and Suriname. In the case of Jamaica, the 12 700 children in the private sector are not taken into account.

Further indication of an underestimated repetition problem lies in the fact that over the past three decades, there have been between 1.5 and 2.0 cohorts of population enrolled in first grade in Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries of the region (Table 13). Barring a sudden increase in enrollment in a given year, two cohorts in first grade indicates that half of the students repeat first grade; in other words, there was an almost 50% rate of repetition in 1980 among first-graders in the region which went down to almost 40% in 1987 - a repetition rate that is still unacceptably high.

The "heterogeneity of ages in first grade" is the third indicator to suggest that repetition rates are higher than reported in statistical forms. The only explanation for the fact that half of first grade students are one or more years behind and a third over two years behind (Table 14) is that there is a high repetition rate, insofar as only 14% register late (Table 8). The heterogeneity of ages renders the teacher's task difficult as programmes and textbooks are usually designed for specific ages and are unsuitable for older students. Poor motivation of older students leads to a lack of discipline and definitely leads to more repetitions. In summary, it is likely that high rates of repetition exist and that the great number of repeaters prevents use of available capacity to provide the whole population with a complete primary education.

Primary education by sector and area

The massive available capacity of primary education is basically due to the efforts of the public sector, even when the private sector plays a complementary role. This capacity has been achieved without affecting the teacher's average workload and, in many instances, while reducing it. Much of the education in rural sectors and marginal urban areas has been supported with public funds, since these families lack the resources to pay for private schooling. One out of every seven students at the primary level in the region attends private

Table 12

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: BASIC EDUCATION. PERCENTAGES OF REPETITION REPORTED BY GRADE, 1987

	1º	2º	3º	4º	5º	6º	7º	8º	9º	Total 1º to 9º	Differences between gross and net rate
South America											
Brazil[a]	24	19	15	12	20	16	16	10	...	18	17.5
Colombia	20	14	11	9	6	10	9	8	5	12	40.9
Ecuador[b]	10	9	6	6	4	2	...	...	...	7	20.9
Peru	18	14	12	9	8	4	...	...	...	12	...
Central America and Panama											
Costa Rica[a]	17	12	9	8	5	2	11	10	7	10	16.9
El Salvador	17	8	6	5	3	2	1	1	0	7	7.7
Honduras	25	14	12	8	6	1	...	...	...	15	14.3
Nicaragua	25	13	12	7	5	2	...	...	...	12	22.3
Panama	19	16	11	9	6	3	17	11	8	12	16.2
Gulf of Mexico											
Cuba[c]	0	12	6	13	9	6	8	5	3	7	6.5
Mexico	18	11	9	8	5	1	1	3	2	8	21.9
Dominican Republic[a]	26	16	13	11	10	9	8	6	...	16	54.0
English-Speaking Caribbean											
Aruba	13	9	9	9	9	2	...	...	...	9	13.4
Dominica	14	6	6	8	5	93	...	...	...	22	10.7
Jamaica[d]	7	2	1	1	2	7	1	1	2	3	8.7
Suriname	30	20	21	24	22	22	...	...	...	23	31.2

Source: Table 10 and SIRI-OREALC-Unesco survey, 1987.

[a] 1986.
[b] Ecuador: there is automatic promotion by cycle: from grade 1 to grade 2, from grade 3 to grade 4 and from grade 5 to grade 6.
[c] In Cuba, there is automatic promotion until grade 3.
[d] In Jamaica, there is automatic promotion until grade 6 and the figures in this table correspond to the public sector only.

Table 13

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRIMARY EDUCATION. RATIO BETWEEN GRADE 1 POPULATION OF NORMAL AGE AND ENROLLMENT IN GRADE 1, 1980 AND 1987

	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
	Brazil	Remaining countries				
1980						
Grade 1 population of normal age	2 997 523	2 185 542	657 806	2 606 247	27 781	8 474 899
Enrollment in grade 1	7 002 798	3 711 910	1 041 535	4 287 171	28 717	16 131 939
Ratio between enrollment and population	2.3	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.0	1.9
1987						
Grade 1 population of normal age	3 515 583	2 448 890	765 067	2 385 222	85 485	9 200 247
Enrollment in grade 1	7 008 806	3 819 124	1 226 227	3 570 832	92 937	15 717 926
Ratio between enrollment and population	2.0	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.1	1.7

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987; CELADE. Population estimated by single age, 1987.
Note: This table does not include information on Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Haïti; for the English-speaking Caribbean sub-region, figures refer only to Aruba, Dominica, Guyana and St. Lucia; for 1987, they include Jamaica and Suriname as well.

Table 14

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: ENROLLMENT IN PRIMARY EDUCATION AND OVERAGE FIRST-GRADE STUDENTS, 1987

	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
	Brazil	Remaining countries				
Grade 1 enrollment	7 008 806	2 878 922	863 676	3 570 832	95 319	14 417 555
Students 1 year overage or more	4 081 428	1 188 094	440 401	1 397 995	21 891	7 129 809
Percentage	58	41	51	39	23	49
Students 2 years overage or more	2 736 432	553 707	232 589	630 585	3 829	4 157 142
Percentage	39	19	27	18	4	29

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987.
Note: This table does not include information on Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Guatemala or Haïti; for the English-speaking Caribbean sub-region, information is only included on Aruba, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Suriname.

school (Table 15); some private schools are subsidized with public funds while some public schools operate on the basis of agreements with private institutions which select and appoint principals.

By reducing the income of middle-class households, the economic crisis of the eighties limited further growth of the private sector, at least in the case of schools which operate solely on the basis of payment received for services provided. There are, however, a wide variety of private institutions, from schools connected to religious or philanthropic organizations (many of which are free) to

Table 15

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRIMARY EDUCATION, STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

	Years	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
		Brazil	Remaining countries				
Students	1980	22 598 254	19 325 469	3 397 205	17 882 916	975 783	64 179 627
	1985	24 769 359	20 736 545	3 990 689	18 282 839	982 844	68 762 276
	1987	25 607 893[a]	21 675 887	4 254 777	17 930 288	942 710	70 411 555
Private sector (%)	1987	12.3	16.1	10.5	8.1	21.7	12.4
Teachers	1980	884 257	717 066	95 794	497 420	32 779	2 227 316
	1985	1 026 028	795 677	111 284	580 522	39 581	2 553 092
	1987	1 068 484[a]	828 440	122 343	592 414	35 515	2 647 196
Students per teacher	1980	26	27	35	36	30	29
	1985	24	26	36	31	25	27
	1987	24[a]	26	35	30	27	27
Private sector	1987	22[a]	28	29	33	21	27
Schools	1980	201 986	120 627	25 342	96 252	3 189	447 396
	1985	191 000	131 146	26 771	97 071	3 077	449 065
	1987	192 164[a]	139 471	28 416	99 256	3 067	462 374
Students per school	1980	112	160	134	186	306	143
	1985	130	158	149	188	319	153
	1987	133[a]	155	150	181	307	152

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987.

[a] 1986.

Table 16

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRIMARY EDUCATION; STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS BY GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, 1987

	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
	Brazil[a]	Remaining countries				
Students[b]						
Urban areas	19 789 213	10 522 217	2 076 488	10 918 215	39 148	43 345 281
Rural areas	5 818 680	5 312 899	2 178 289	6 771 198	43 786	20 124 852
Rural students as percentage of total	23	34	51	37	53	32
Percentage of rural population	27	31	56	33	53	32
Inequality index	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.1	1.0[c]	1.0
Students per teacher[d]						
Urban areas						
Total	24	40	33	32	25	29
Private	22	34	29	34	26	27
Rural areas						
Total	23	33	37	30	21	29
Private	28	29	32	33	18	30
Students per school[e]						
Urban areas	450	310	436	367	...	388
Rural areas	39	74	92	107	...	65

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco survey, 1987.

[a] 1986.
[b] Does not include information on Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay; for the English-speaking Caribbean, only St. Kitts and Nevis and Suriname are included.
[c] It is assumed to be equal to the percentage of rural students, since almost the entire population attends.
[d] Bolivia and Venezuela, as well as the countries mentioned in b), are not included.
[e] Chile is not included.
[f] The Anglophone Caribbean sub-region is not included.

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those operated for profit, but all tend to be concentrated in the urban sector. In all of the countries except for one, private participation in the rural sector is less than a fifth of what it is in the urban sector (Table 16).

The relative efficiency of the public and private sectors is little known and it would be useful to carry out case studies in order to get more accurate information and thus a more detailed analysis of efficiency and the capacity to accede to private education as per-capita income rises.

Increased educational supply should not have necessarily affected quality, especially since it was developed simultaneously with a reduction in the number of students per teacher (Table 15). While in 1980, 8 countries reported an average of 35 or more students per teacher (in a total of 30 countries for which data was available), in 1987 only 4 reported the same ratio. The number of students per teacher in the private sector, as compared to that in the public sector, is greater in some regions and less in others, in both urban and rural areas (Table 15). In any case, there are no significant differences in the number of students per teacher between the public and private sectors, except in one country - (31 students per teacher in the public sector and 39 in the private sector) - which is where the greatest increase in the participation of the private sector has occurred (from 20% in 1980 to 35% in 1987). This increase was generated by the payment of subsidies on a day-of-student-attendance basis which are equal for municipally-run (public) schools and private schools which do not demand compulsory payments from students' families.

Primary education is becoming more equitable among different geographic areas as all or most of the school-age population is being offered access (Table 16). In fact, the situation is noteworthy in ten countries in which the percentage of rural enrollment exceeds the percentage of population in rural areas. The supply of primary education, in terms of the number of spaces, is equitably distributed among all sectors of the population (qualitative differences are dealt with in the last Section of this article). Some of the factors related to this increase in the availability of primary education appear to be: campaigns to generate interest in educating one's children; the fact that most parents now have some minimum level of schooling which allows them to appreciate the advantages of educating their children; shorter distances to multigrade schools; the increased share of urban population; improved systems of transportation and communications, and reduced population growth rates. Several other factors could doubtlessly be added to this list.

Organization of teachers' tasks

The increase in educational supply has not limited the proportion of administrative or supervisory personnel. Between 10 and 20% of teachers carry out administrative or managerial tasks (Table 17). That percentage goes down to 5 or 10% in rural areas. This is an aspect on which case studies are required in order to provide the countries' educational authorities with information that will help in better organizing teachers' work(11). Descriptions of the ways in which work is organized are needed, within both centralized and decentralized systems and within systems of good or poor quality, in order to identify the differences and promote the most effective available strategies. Information is only available on nine countries at the present time but, given the importance of modalities for distributing teachers' work, SIRI will continue to work towards obtaining further information on this aspect. Special attention should be paid to the practice of assigning or commissioning teachers for other tasks, since this practice distorts an analysis of the figures and eventually, management of the system both in terms of efficiency and in terms of improper use of public resources.

Primary schools tend to be large enough in urban areas (over 200 students per school) and too small in rural areas (Table 16). Running schools with too few students leads to elevated costs or poorer quality in these rural institutions, except when teachers are trained and provided with textbooks to support pedagogical techniques needed to operate multigrade classes. Except for Haïti and El Salvador, all the countries for which information is available have an average of fewer than 100 children per rural school and in six, the average is 50 or less. The low concentration of population and the fact that the advantages of working in multigrade systems are not exploited seem to explain why a significant number of rural schools are incomplete (over 40% in 5 of the 7 countries for which data is available) (Table 18). Too many incomplete schools might then explain why rural schools are small and generate early dropout. This vicious circle can only be short-circuited by training teachers in multigrade techniques and providing semi-programmed textbooks to facilitate more autonomous learning on the part of students in upper grades of primary schools.

In summary, the expansion of educational

(11) Information on the quality of teachers is referred to in the last Section of this article.

Table 17

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRIMARY EDUCATION. CLASSROOM TEACHERS[a], 1987

Country[b]	Total per country		Rural areas		Classroom teachers as percentage of total no. of teachers		
	Classroom teachers	Percentage private	Classroom teachers	Percentage private	Total country	Urban areas	Rural areas
Chile	58 480	31.4	12 698	21.2	81.0	74.2	94.4
Venezuela[c]	88 031	12.2	...	...	78.5	...	...
El Salvador	19 223	13.1	6 613	2.1	86.0	82.6	93.2
Nicaragua	16 280	11.3	7 674	3.1	88.9	84.4	94.6
Panama	13 707	6.5	8 201	0.1	88.7	80.6	95.2
Cuba	59 819	–	23 478	–	97.8	89.0	97.3
Dominican Republic[c,d]	17 404	–	9 682	–	97.8	98.2	97.3
St. Kitts[d]	241		170		85.6	86.0	85.3
Suriname	2 284	51.8	1 165	42.1	79.9	84.1	76.9

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987.

[a] Classroom teachers are teachers who actually teach in classrooms; in other words, who do not do management or administrative work exclusively.

[b] Aruba, Brazil, Grenada and Mexico report an equal number of teaching positions and classroom teachers.

[c] 1986.

[d] This refers to public sector teachers.

Table 18

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRIMARY EDUCATION . INCOMPLETE SCHOOLS BY ADMINISTRATIVE SECTOR, 1987

Country	Public Sector				Private Sector			
	Number of incomplete schools	Schools as percentage of total			Number of incomplete schools	Schools as percentage of total		
		Public sector	Urban area	Rural area		Public sector	Urban area	Rural area
Bolivia	2 793	...	...	...	..	...	...	...
Colombia	18 111	53.0	26.2	62.1	1 035	29.4	28.7	38.6
Ecuador[a]	10 713	...	26.0	88.6	...	...	...	...
El Salvador	1 310	46.0	3.4	62.8	89	22.5	19.7	50.0
Honduras	2 600	39.8	...	...	64	23.4	...	...
Panama	260	4.1	2.1	11.3	20	18.9	19.4	–
Mexico	15 596	20.4	...	...	272	8.7	...	...
Dominican Republic	3 867	79.7	63.6	81.6	...	...	...	...
Aruba	–	–	–	–	4	15.4	...	...
Suriname	3	2.3	2.2	2.4	13	10.4	–	26.5

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987.

[a] This corresponds to the total of both private and public; information by sector is unavailable.

supply to provide the entire population with access to primary education has revealed the heterogeneous nature of the new groups joining the education systems and the inflexibility of the systems and lack of teacher training to implement appropriate pedagogical technology. The lack of an effective response on the part of education systems to linguistic, cultural, geographic, economic and social plurality results in high rates of repetition and, thus, heterogeneity of age which transforms the problems of additional access into a virtual vicious circle, since it is more difficult to teach effectively when a group is decidedly heterogeneous. Such heterogeneity of age and of readiness for one's participation in school is especially important in the lower grades. Since these problems are most often seen in lower-income sectors, serious inequity is generated which, in turn, leads to further problems of a political and social nature.

Relation between quantitative and qualitative aspects

Several countries are using imaginative measures to cope with some of the problems encountered in primary education. The development of efficient multigrade schools, for example, plays a key role in the ability to provide universal primary education. This type of school is an indispensable prerequisite for delivering complete primary education of high quality in regions with disperse populations. Experiments carried out with multigrade schools and other actions to reduce repetition and temporary dropout will also improve the quality of education.

Through SIRI, the Major Project has stimulated the analysis of students' access, attendance and progress to higher grades in primary school, developing new indicators and methodologies for their study. Emphasis on the comparison of macro and micro indicators (for example, comparing a macro indicator such as the number of cohorts in first grade versus a micro indicator such as the number of repetitions reported by a school principal) makes it possible to identify inconsistencies in the information and, in such cases, to seek out additional methods of analysis. It is hoped that there will be greater regional collaboration on these aspects in the future.

In summary, access to primary education has been expanded to include isolated groups in rural areas who had thus far remained excluded from the system, despite the economic restrictions under which the systems operate. Although there is a generalized demand for schooling on the part of all social sectors, an average of 10% of students either enter late or drop out early. That is to say, there is a problem in terms of effective demand. But there is also a high rate of repetition, preventing students from moving up to higher grades of primary education, despite the fact that there are enough spaces available for all of the students of the corresponding school age. *It may be concluded, therefore, that to a great extent, the solution to the problem of universalization of complete primary education implies, from the point of view of both supply and demand, an improvement in the quality of education.* In other words, meeting the first goal of the Major Project within the agreed time frame depends on an appropriate selection of pedagogical techniques that reduce repetition and stimulate interest on the part of students and their families. Experiments and strategies implemented in the region to deal with this aspect are analyzed below.

Special education

Insofar as the first goal of the Major Project - to provide access to primary education - is close to being reached, there has also been success in ensuring that many handicapped children who require special education because of their mental, physical or sensorial handicaps, attend class(12) However, the exact scale of the problem is unknown, there are no clear policies on how to deal with it, and the scale of resources required for each alternative strategy is unknown as well. Many handicapped children attend regular schools, which are unable to properly diagnose their problems or offer them the specialized attention they require to prevent frequent repetition (given their problems with their surroundings and their adaptation to them). Because of the high human and economic implications of handicaps, the countries tend to emphasize strategies for the prevention of deficiencies and disabilities, but strategies for care and rehabilitation must eventually be drawn up as well.

Levels and forms of education for the handicapped

The percentage of handicapped children of school age, whether in school or not, has yet to be determined. All of the countries which have levels of access to primary education of over 90% of the corresponding single age group (Table 8) are probably educating a

(12) Some fragmentary data suggest that a small number of handicapped children are not included in census statistics. See T. Lenz and M. Alvarado, "Niños Especiales en areas rurales", MinEd-OREALC-UMSA, La Paz, 1987.

Table 19

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: SPECIAL EDUCATION, 1987

	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean	Total
	Brazil[a]	Remaining countries				
Students total[b]	...	323 945	13 667	221 957	5 113	564 682
Private (%)	...	10.9	1.0	0.6	7.8	6.6
Urban (%)	...	98.3	94.6	...	47.5	96.1
In the regular system[c]	104 268	150 774	8 225	3 553	1 541	268 361
Private (%)	...	4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.8
Urban (%)	...	99.5	99.6	...	79.7	99.2
In special schools[d]	...	277 390	19 320	53 104	3 164	352 978
Private (%)	...	34.1	0.7	2.7	6.1	27.1
Urban (%)	...	96.0	88.4	...	83.6	35.0
Teachers total[d]	...	28 196	1 622	24 832	270	54 920
Private (%)	...	15.6	1.3	0.0	16.2	8.2
Urban (%)	...	96.6	99.6	...	98.1	97.3
Students per teacher[e]	...	12	11	9	18	10
Enrollment in primary school	25 607 893	19 372 359	3 021 082	17 001 288	470 740	65 473 362
Enrollment in special education as percentage of primary education	0.4[f]	1.7	0.5	1.3	1.1	0.9

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987. Unesco. Review of present situation of special education. Paris, 1988.
Note: The figures for sub-regional totals and the general total include only countries with data. Averages are weighted; they do not include countries without information.

[a] 1986.
[b] Information on 21 countries.
[c] Information on 14 countries.
[d] Information on 18 countries.
[e] This corresponds to enrollment in primary education in countries with information on special education.
[f] Enrollment in special education in regular schools was taken into account.

greater number of handicapped children in the regular system than indicated in their statistics. Indeed, it is estimated that at least one out of every ten people in developing countries has a physical, mental or sensorial problem(13). But the number of handicapped children that would correspond to societies with high levels of access to primary education appears inadequately reflected in the statistics on special education prepared in the countries (Table 19). While primary education reaches 71.4 million (Table 2), special education covers only 1% of this figure. In other words, it would appear that between 2 and 9% of the school-aged population enrolled in the regular system have not been identified as handicapped and have requirements that have not been met. Due either to inadequate diagnoses or a lack of resources for providing the care required (either in special schools or integrated into the regular system), a significant proportion of the remaining handicapped children attend the regular system, to their disadvantage, since they do not receive the supplementary assistance they require in order to perform satisfactorily at school.

Countries are trying to mainstream - i.e., to integrate special students into the regular system and a normal social environment as much as possible. In doing so, they are following recent trends in the countries that have made most headway in best dealing with such problems(14). This is also reflected in

(13) United Nations, "World Action Programme for the Disabled", New York, 1983, p. 12. See also United Nations, "Disability: Situation, Strategies and Policies", New York, 1987. Nevertheless, developed countries such as Germany, Finland, Netherlands, Israel, Norway, New Zealand or Sweden provide special education for only 3 or 5% of the school-aged population whereas Denmark does so for 13% (Unesco, "Review of the present situation of Special Education", Paris, 1988.

(14) Only 10% or less of disabled persons (less than 1% of all children) have disabilities so serious that they require special care outside of the regular education system. See United Nations, "Disability...", op. cit., p. 53-4.

the fact that almost all of the countries make a distinction in their statistics between special students " taught within the regular system" and those taught "in special schools" (Table 19). When this distinction is made, it becomes evident that less than half of handicapped children attend special schools (the percentage would be even lower if all the children with disabilities who are studying within the regular education system at the present time but who are not identified as such were included in the "handicapped" category). It is also evident that special education is only available in urban areas and, in the region, 27.1% of special education (in 6 countries it ranges from 30 to 52%) is supplied by the private sector with priority for children of families who are able to pay for the service.

Technology and strategy for special education

The variety of technologies used or types of education offered, characterized by major differences in the student-teacher relationship (next-to-last line in Table 19), suggests a need to exchange information in order to select the best techniques or strategies. In some countries, special schools deal mainly with traditional areas such as visual, hearing and language disabilities whereas in others, problems of autism, slow learning, dyslexia, dyscalculia, hyperactivity and others are dealt with together with the problem of mental retardation. In other countries, existing special schools have been maintained and the care provided for handicapped children has been extended to regular schools through some remedial training and/or differential groups where complementary activities are carried out. In this way, important experience has been gained that can be used as a basis for future development of appropriate forms of education for each of the many different handicaps which exist.

Although it is important to have highly specialized personnel to deal with every type of disability, the countries are emphasizing timely diagnosis, the training of less specialized personnel and, basically, the development of programmes to prevent disabilities. Among the strategies being adopted are: training of (non-specialized) teaching staff to recognize different problems; support for non-formal programmes (with parental participation), foundations and cooperatives for parents of children with specific disabilities; use of the mass media; interdisciplinary teams (education, health, family welfare and others); appointment of remedial reading teachers or differential groups (special classrooms), especially in primary school; and programmes aimed at integrating children with special needs into regular classrooms in regular primary schools (mainstreaming). However, a joint effort on the part of the different technical sectors is needed in order to help the many students now failing early grades on account of physical or mental disabilities which require specialized attention.

Preventive policies and the general development of the countries appear to substantially reduce the percentage of handicapped persons. For example, accident prevention programmes and pre- and post-natal care in developing countries of other regions seem to have reduced the prevalence of blindness in the last third of this decade(15). Latin American and Caribbean countries, on the other hand, are implementing child and school nutrition programmes (the latter with positive results in terms of school attendance and, consequently, in terms of academic achievement), environmental programmes, pre- and post-natal care, control of contagious diseases, provision of drinking water, immunization and accident prevention programmes which should significantly lower the percentage of handicapped children in the future. Better educated parents is another important factor in improving the care of new generations of children and, in turn, facilitating the comprehension of mass media campaigns, especially those aimed at educating the community on the integration of the handicapped.

In summary, there is a trend to adopt measures aimed at finding a combined solution to the problems of quantity and quality in the supply of special education along with prevention in order to reduce disabilities. It is difficult, however, to evaluate the results obtained since the real impact is often long-term, given the slow development of this type of effort. Better information is also required on the scale of efforts being carried out at the present time and the incidence of exogenous factors such as levels of economic development, health, nutrition, education and social stability.

Literacy training, post-literacy training and adult education

Although, for the first time, a decrease in

(15) United Nations, "Elaboración de estadisticas sobre los impedidos: estudios de casos", New York, 1986, p. 42.

the number of absolute illiterates (i.e., as self-reported in population censuses) has been observed in the region, there is still a serious problem in that 42.8 million - slightly over 15% of the population over the age of 15 - remain illiterate as well as a large number of functionally illiterate individuals (persons who have received literacy training or consider themselves literate but who are unable to cope with even a minimum level of reading, writing or arithmetic in their daily lives). The problem is particularly serious in that it is concentrated in a few countries, among certain indigenous population groups and persons over 40. In any case, it is important to make a distinction between the two categories of illiteracy - absolute and functional - in order to analyze the problem accurately and prevent ambiguities in the use of the information available on each country. For this reason, an analysis of each type of illiteracy is presented separately in this report.

Absolute Illiteracy

Progress in the fight against absolute illiteracy has meant that the problem is now concentrated in six countries, although serious problems also exist in terms of the level of absolute illiteracy among the indigenous population of four other countries and among the over-40 population in almost all of the countries in the region (Table 20). Estimates of absolute illiteracy, based on census data at the time, set the figure at 44.3 million in 1980. This figure was reduced to 42.8 million by 1987 while the 100 million inhabitants by which the population increased during this period were provided with literacy training as well(16). Estimates of absolute illiteracy during this period are comparable, since they are based on projections of census data established with standard demographic methodologies. National estimates are even more optimistic in that they consider another 4.9 million were given literacy training through campaigns or basic adult education courses (Middle line of Table 20).

Despite all the progress made, and assuming that this historical trend continues, the problem will only have been reduced to 39.3 million illiterate individuals or 11.1% of the population over 15, by the year 2000 (Table 20). This estimate suggests that the region should double its efforts to ensure that absolute illiteracy is reduced to less than 10% before the end of the century. Special projects must be prepared in order to reduce the problem in Brazil (which accounts for half of the completely illiterate persons in the region), the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Haïti (which would otherwise have percentages of absolute illiteracy by the end of this century of 15% or more). Similarly, special projects are needed for the indigenous populations of Bolivia, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru which continue to report high rates of illiteracy, especially among indigenous women. Such projects would be aimed at extending primary schooling to rural populations and providing opportunities for adult literacy training. More precise information is needed about the groups which have not yet been included in catchment areas of education systems or literacy training centres in order to design projects effectively.

Significant headway in the struggle against absolute illiteracy has been made among the young population, and half of absolute illiteracy is now accounted for among the over-40 population. An analysis of absolute illiteracy rates by age group shows constant progress in all the countries (Table 20). Illiteracy rates in the 15-to-19-year old group - estimated on the basis of rates of access to primary education (similar to those presented in Table 8) - are almost half of those for the 31-to-40-year old group calculated on the basis of data from the last census available. Furthermore, rates of absolute illiteracy among this last group are a little less than half of those for the over-40 group.

The progress made in overcoming absolute illiteracy is associated with the increase in the rates of access to primary schooling and the selection of more effective literacy training programmes. The headway observed in access to primary education - referred to above - explains the low rates of illiteracy among younger population groups. Thirteen of the twenty Latin American countries and all of the English-speaking Caribbean countries have absolute illiteracy rates of less than 6% in the 15-to-19-year old group (Table 20), including children with serious physical or mental impediments to attending regular primary school (see section on special education). The rest of the progress made is due to the greater accuracy with which attention to traditionally ignored groups has been channelled, the selection of improved forms of adult literacy training and the identification of aspects which encourage adults who have

(16) When, in December 1979, the countries proposed implementing the Major Project,those 44.3 million absolute illiterates represented 28% of the 159 million inhabitants of the region.

Table 20

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ABSOLUTE ILLITERATES[a], 1987 and 2000

Year and age groups	Absolute illiterates and rate of illiteracy	South America		Central America and Panama	Gulf of Mexico	English-speaking Caribbean[b]	Total
		Brazil	Remaining countries				
1987							
15-17	Illiterates	1 422 477	563 778	464 002	562 620	2 197	3 015 075
	Rate of illiteracy	10.0	4.1	15.9	4.5	0.3	6.9
20-30	Illiterates	3 086 391	1 434 036	1 141 784	2 207 421	7 609	7 877 241
	Rate of illiteracy	16.4	5.6	25.2	10.0	0.5	10.9
31-40	Illiterates	5 081 323	1 314 546	736 866	1 727 862	5 011	8 865 607
	Rate of illiteracy	17.3	8.4	27.3	14.7	1.2	14.8
41 and over	Illiterates	10 005 500	5 667 162	1 946 647	5 347 310	59 989	23 026 608
	Rate of illiteracy	35.5	17.7	41.0	27.4	6.6	26.9
Total	Absolute illiterates	19 595 691	8 979 522	4 289 298	9 845 213	74 806	42 784 531
	Population - 1987	90 592 922	87 046 853	14 895 576	65 821 443	3 513 900	261 870 694
	Rate of illiteracy	21.6	10.3	28.8	15.0	2.1	16.3
Illiterates estimated by the countries[c]		17 320 725[d]	8 548 797	4 289 298	7 616 849	74 806	37 850 475
Given literacy training since last census[e]		2 274 966	430 725	0	2 228 364	0	4 934 055
2000							
15-19	Illiterates	439 329	192 795	167 862	190 689	2 197	992 872
	Rate of illiteracy	2.5	1.1	4.1	1.4	0.3	1.9
20-27	Illiterates	1 243 138	493 179	429 429	453 031	2 616	2 621 393
	Rate of illiteracy	5.0	2.1	8.0	2.3	0.4	3.5
28-43	Illiterates	4 397 880	1 947 332	1 542 794	2 678 503	10 004	10 576 513
	Rate of illiteracy	13.5	5.1	22.0	8.1	0.8	9.4
44 and over	Illiterates	12 207 300	5 272 613	2 102 151	5 523 180	59 989	25 165 232
	Rate of illiteracy	25.7	13.9	34.7	22.0	6.6	21.4
Total	Absolute illiterates	18 287 647	7 905 918	4 242 237	8 845 402	74 806	39 356 011
	Population - 2000	122 498 556	116 916 197	22 454 040	91 559 072	3 513 900	356 941 765
	Rate of illiteracy	14.9	6.8	18.9	9.7	2.1	11.0

Source: Unesco. Compendio de estadisticas relativas al analfabetismo. Informes y estudios estadisticos No. 30. Paris, 1988. Unesco. Statistical Yearbook 1988. Paris, 1988. CELADE, Boletín Demografico No. 38, Santiago, July 1986. Mortality rates estimated by CELADE, 1989. SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987. 1980-1981 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

[a] Estimate by cohort study based on most recent census figures available.

[b] Antigua, Barbados, the Netherlands Antilles and the Bahama are not included.

[c] Countries for which information is available are included: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, El Salvador, Honduras, Haiti, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

[d] 1986.

[e] Calculated for countries with estimated illiteracy figures lower than those obtained in the study of cohorts.

enrolled in literacy training to complete their programmes(17).

Overcoming absolute illiteracy in younger generations also implies that the traditional discrimination against women in primary education has been overcome. In most of the countries, there is now no significant difference between the rates of absolute illiteracy among men and women under 30. Differences do persist, however, among older age groups, especially among certain indigenous groups, and it would appear that no substantial changes are possible among those older groups, despite the efforts made by the countries.

Functional illiteracy

Progress in overcoming absolute illiteracy suggests the advisability of initiating both an analysis of the factors which lead to higher levels of functional literacy and experiments with new strategies to reach literacy levels required for any effective participation in economic and social development processes. "Functional literacy" is understood to be the ability to understand and exchange written communication, including simple calculations, and is considered a prerequisite for taking part in processes of technological change; for example, in working with new agricultural crops or in campaigns to prevent diseases and in health programmes. In order to successfully handle this stage of the struggle against illiteracy, new indicators must be available and there must be understanding of the role of both the regular education system (day and night school) and adult literacy programmes in solving the problem(18). Although international comparisons of absolute illiteracy are based on population census figures, a more precise definition of the indicators used is needed in order to design strategies aimed at achieving functional literacy that would enable individuals to take part in a process of sustained development. Such indicators are needed to define realistic goals and control the progress made towards those goals in order to adjust either the goals themselves or the strategies employed(19).

Although access has helped to overcome absolute illiteracy, overcoming functional illiteracy depends basically on the quality of the education offered. Fortunately, there is greater understanding in the countries of the region of how overcoming functional illiteracy depends on the school effectively accomplishing its literacy training role and that the obstacles created by linguistic codes restricted to elites must be done away with. In various English-speaking Caribbean countries, there is concern over the fact that an increasing number of students who finish primary school do not have an adequate grasp of reading, writing or arithmetic. Measurements of performance in several Latin American countries also indicate a low level of performance in the first years of primary school. Along the lines of the previous section on the role of quality in making primary education universally accessible, it must also be mentioned here that it is essential that the quality of primary education be improved in order to ensure minimum levels of functional literacy (an analysis of the quality of primary education in the region is presented below).

Experiments in literacy training are being increasingly evaluated and their findings systematically reviewed, and the countries have given them special priority in order to face the challenge of the coming years with the best possible alternatives(20). There are a fair number of evaluations -some of them rather sophisticated- of literacy training programmes defined accurately enough to be applied on a massive scale, without the involvement of the person or group which origi-

(17) Factors such as course schedules, background and attendance on the part of the literacy trainer, physical surroundings, links with other programmes, interest on the part of the community, family commitment, employment and timely delivery of educational material have been identified by research carried out within REDALF and REPLAD networks as crucial to a student's success.

(18) When functional literacy has not been achieved through regular primary education, an adult training process is needed in order to create close links between the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic and training for work and production; such a process must necessarily be based on the needs of the adult in his/her real life and work.

(19) REDALF carried out an Ibero American Seminar on Functional Literacy with support from the OEI. An outline of the main proposals on and experiences with functional illiteracy as well as a proposal for regional research were published.

(20) Representatives of the countries in PROMEDLAC II (Bogota, 1987) considered the evaluation of national literacy training programmes a priority. Complying with this mandate, a "Questionnaire to be applied to institutions which develop and/or have developed literacy training programmes in the last decade" was prepared within REDALF (Unesco-OREALC, Santiago 1988). The publication includes a Guide for administering the questionnaire in institutions. The questionnaires have been filled out in most countries of the region. The results of this collective effort were analyzed at the "Regional Seminar on National Education Policies and Strategies for Overcoming Illiteracy during the 1990–2000 Period" (Managua, November 1989).

nally developed the experiment. Outstanding experiments include bilingual education programmes for young people and adults; radio programmes which combine radio scripts with the use of readers and techniques for following the course at a distance; programmes involving parents' support of their children's education or the use of equipment (e.g., computers) from their children's schools; and the use of other mass media such as television or newspapers.

Evaluations suggest certain changes, such as the need to simplify the contents of educational materials and emphasize the production and use of guides for literacy trainers as a basic tool for their own training. Evaluations also indicate the advisability of formulating selective priorities (population groups which, because of their special nature, should have access to literacy), in terms of both geographical areas and social sectors.

Important efforts have been made to provide literacy training to indigenous groups, using new approaches, emphasizing teaching and learning in the native language and the production of readers and textbooks which take cultural characteristics into account. But there has often lacked an overall approach that would include more appropriate strategies for teaching reading and writing in the official language –which many people do not speak– and for teaching it orally in order to ensure that reading and writing skills acquired in the native language can be transferred to the official language. In many cases, indigenous adults' resistance to literacy training in their own language derives from their unclear understanding of the advantages of learning to read and write in a language that is not socially recognized, when the environment in which they live requires them to learn an official language in order to satisfy their needs and protect their rights. This perception may derive from a lack of information or an actual lack of effectiveness in the methods for eventually grasping the official language.

Women have also been the focus of special efforts. As access to primary education was extended, as mentioned above, regular education programmes and literacy training programmes have been developed with emphasis on civic and family education in an attempt to encourage women to participate more fully in all areas of economic, social and cultural life, on an equal footing with men. Regional studies, meetings and publications have dealt with education and indigenous women and have been useful in comparing cultural characteristics and forms of education among different ethnic groups and in proposing elements of a full education (literacy training, civic education, health training, agricultural production and handicraft techniques) that would enable women to challenge and overcome their traditional marginality.

Post-literacy training

Despite all of these efforts and progress, a broader national commitment to eradicate absolute and functional illiteracy is still lacking. A commitment of this nature is expressed in an intersectoral approach and participation, in social reinforcement of frequent use of written communication and, if possible, in becoming part of a global strategy for overcoming poverty. Moving forward to post-literacy training requires: *broadening the narrow definitions of education to make them more compatible with adult education; incorporating other ministries and enterprises in the project; and coordinating activities to be carried out through a series of agencies.* Although it is a difficult task, the countries are now examining efforts made in this area in the region.

Partial evaluation of literacy training programmes thus far suggests that the weakness observed in the follow-up, reinforcement and consolidation of learning among the newly literate is responsible, to a great extent, for neutralizing much of the results of literacy training and creating doubt about the validity of many actions. This is particularly negative in terms of the lack of reading and reader-training policies which might include: *mass production and use of reading material and incentives to encourage the inhabitants of poor neighborhoods to associate their ability to read with improvements in their lives.* There is an alarming lack of methods and material for teaching mathematics –despite some experiments that have produced excellent results– and this has discouraged adults who have specific concerns in this area.

This is the right time to design the relevant actions to deal with the type of illiteracy that is the problem in each country, since the General Assembly of the United Nations declared 1990 International Literacy Year (ILY). The countries can get international support for defining mid- or long-term strategies for eventually eradicating absolute or functional illiteracy, according to the degree of progress they have made on this issue(21). The first

(21) The results of the Technical Consultation to prepare activities for International Literacy Year along with suggestions and recommendations for action proposed by the participants –regional specialists invited in a personal capacity– to seek effective solutions to the problem of functional illiteracy, were published in REDALF, "1990. Año Internacional de la Alfabetización", Unesco-OREALC, 1988.

step is to set up national ILY committees, with representatives of governmental, non-governmental and grassroots organizations, the media and advertising consultants' associations and producers of pedagogical materials along with well-known personalities. With the support of a technical secretariat (which could be the national organization for the planning of education) and with adequate resources, these national committees should prepare, formulate, organize the implementation of and evaluate the national ILY programme. A significant number of these actions should be to identify and develop new sources and mechanisms for funding.

Adult education

Both regular and non-formal adult education is offered as evening and night courses, mainly in urban areas and by Ministries or Secretariats of Education. Its principal form is that of basic adult education for young people who have quit the regular day system in order to work and adults who never had access to school or who quit along the way. The development of basic adult education has levelled off and has even been cut back in some countries as an ever-increasing percentage of children enter day school at the appropriate age and attend for several years. This development in basic adult education enrollment is consistent with the norms for school entry in the majority of the countries - young people over the age of 15 are usually accepted into basic adult education - and with the increase of learning opportunities offered by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in response to the specific needs of adults(22).

Although there is not enough information available to characterize adult education on a regional basis (the information available is presented in Table 21), it is safe to say that some of the most significant achievements over the past decade have been the development of forms of literacy and post-literacy training in conjunction with: *rural development and services in urban areas; women's education, especially on health matters; the establishment of networks for cooperation in popular adult education; and education of children in rural day school.* In some countries there have been attempts to meet users' needs, taking specific cultural conditions into account (including linguistic codes) and to generate greater participation. In others, the fact that most basic adult education students are young people has been taken into account and an attempt has been made to identify the similarities and differences between basic day education and basic adult education.

Although school programmes which fail to recognize an adult's knowledge and life experience continue to be applied, there have been successful experiments which associate systematic education with vital needs. They include education for parents on preparing their children for entering primary school or meeting legal and administrative requirements, especially simple bookkeeping, in order to carry out some productive activity. In some cases, there have been highly successful experiments with the use of computers for bookkeeping, inventory and billing purposes. In other experiments, day schools have set up short courses for parents who are interested, taught by agricultural experts, health, nutrition and environmental specialists, social workers, specialists in social and general legislation and craftsmen. The search for forms of teaching even better suited to students' needs obviously remains a priority in adult education.

There have been experiments in which literacy or post-literacy training has been combined with courses offered by institutions specialized in preparing students for work. Experience in Brazil and Colombia in this area and a few versatile forms of education have proven successful and facilitated the adaptation of adults who have found themselves displaced from their jobs as a result of industrial, agricultural and commercial transformations to jobs in new activities generated by these same processes. Although this type of activity is usually associated with entities which operate outside the sphere of ministries of education, it must be taken into account when designing strategies for adult education.

In several countries, important efforts have been carried out to train adult education teachers through certification plans, alternative designs for diversified training of volunteer personnel and innovative training practices. The latter often take the form of workshops at which adult educators carry out a critical analysis of their own experience on a systematic and regular basis. These workshops are often supplemented by initial training and refresher courses supported by self-training manuals and documents. In any event, the fact that most adults in primary education are between 15 and 20 partially reduces problems in terms of training day teachers for evening and night work..

(22) REDALF has published a study on "La contribución de las Organizaciones No Gubernamentales de desarrollo a la educación de adultos", Unesco-OREALC, Santiago, 1989.

Table 21

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ALL TYPES OF ADULT EDUCATION PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR 1987

Country	Total enrollment		Literacy training			Continuation of studies		Training and professional training		
	Formal	Non-formal	Formal	Non-formal	Women (%)	Formal	Women (%)	Formal	Non-formal	Women (%)
Argentina	195 150	...	95 695	...	...	99 455	...	...	...	...
Chile	83 751	159 011	...	9 995	...	83 751	41	...	149 016	...
Colombia	1 151 047	1 692 587	1 032 631	993 285	56	118 416	54	...	1 692 587	...
Ecuador	189 546	...	23 063	...	50	131 520	...	34 963	...	...
Venezuela[a]	316 842	60 428	[b]	...	...	286 538	50	30 304	60 428	...
El Salvador	32 733	35 074	–	31 824	36	32 733	38	–	3 250	80
Nicaragua	118 312	...	92 703	...	47	25 609	49	...	...	...
Panama	55 148	...	27 574	...	...	25 674	...	1 900	...	...
Cuba	66 426	...	...	...	...	66 426	36	...	...	
Mexico	737 498	1 595 536	15 849	835 163	...	275 101		446 548	760 373	...
Dominican Republic	68 849	44 686	17 286	44 686	48	42 419	41	9 144	–	99
Aruba	450	...	...	...	...	450	42	...	...	...

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987.

[a] 1985-1986.
[b] The 3-year literacy-training programme (1985-1987) was attended by 339,617 people.

Limitations and priorities

Although in both literacy training and adult education, experience has to be systematized and further information gathered, important headway has nevertheless been made in recent years. Experience is now being systematized in seven countries in the area of basic adult education(23) and a regional research on post-literacy training and productive work was carried out, within the framework of the Major Project, in order to evaluate the characteristics of 76 institutional programmes in eleven countries(24). It will eventually be possible to identify and evaluate innovative experiments which offer relative advantages in terms of efficiency, feasibility, the economic rate of return, cultural and social significance and opportunities for beneficiary participation(25). On the other hand, improved computer facilities have allowed the use of census data that had rarely been used in the past. Information gathered during population censuses makes it possible to draw up national maps of absolute illiteracy and pinpoint age, sex, ethnic origin, geographical area, economic sector and category of economic activity. All of this information makes it possible to target the action of the state in the area of literacy training more effectively and serves as a major tool for making decisions on these issues.

Although it is necessary to begin gathering the relevant information needed to define and confront the problem of functional illiteracy, the immediate task of overcoming absolute illiteracy - the second goal of the Major Project - was recently defined by the Intergovernmental Committee of the Major Project at its 1989 meeting in Guatemala, where it was said that:

The present challenge lies in developing and implementing national strategies for literacy training based on an assessment of action to date that would provide the framework for a definitive effort to overcome absolute illiteracy between 1990 and the year 2000. In developing such strategy, a national commitment and collaboration are needed so that, in accordance with the specific characteristics of the problem in each country, the necessary work that must be done by the institutions most closely involved with literary training - governmental, non-governmental and grassroots organizations - can be defined and carried out.

Quality in primary education(26)

Both direct and indirect indicators on the quality of primary education reveal serious problems in most of the education systems of the region which mainly affect students from the most vulnerable population groups, despite growing efforts on the part of the countries to reduce these problems through several strategies. Indeed, direct indicators such as the high repetition rates referred to above, the poor academic performance in some countries of the region - as compared to developed countries - or the low achievement of rural students as compared to urban students, reveal serious problems in terms of quality. Indirect indicators - factors which appear to influence students' achievement - such as teachers' relatively low salaries; the actual short duration of the school year; the fact that many students do not have textbooks; the poor physical condition of schools or high seasonal absenteeism, confirm the existence of problems in terms of the quality of primary education in the region. However, in the future, it will be necessary to obtain better indicators of the quality of education available and the results obtained.

Although an examination of the quality of education in terms of its incidence on the political, technological or cultural development of a country would be helpful, the information available in SIRI allows analysis only in terms of academic performance and children's anxiety and self-esteem. Despite the limitation of such an approach, it is possible to examine the efficiency with which resources earmarked for education are used to reduce inequalities in attendance and academic performance and to progress through the system.

The problem of quality in primary educa-

(23) Experience in Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru is described in REDALF "Alternativas de Alfabetización", Unesco-OREALC, 1988.

(24) S. Schmelkes, "Postalfabetización y Trabajo en America Latina", Centro de Estudios Educativos, 1987.

(25) A new research project has been carried out since 1988 on basic adult education in 13 countries and it is hoped that the data will be processed by the end of 1990. It is being carried out through national institutions in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela and Uruguay. With the cooperation of CREFAL, the study was completed in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama.

(26) Information used in this section is available in the working document "Avances, obstáculos y prioridades en acción para el futuro", Third meeting of the Major Project Regional Intergovernmental Committee, 1989, Promedlac III/ Unesco-OREALC.

tion varies within the region, but tends to have the greatest impact on deprived population groups. There are considerable variations within countries, geographical areas and socioeconomic levels, but the consensus is that it affects most students in the region, despite the many efforts made in almost all of the countries to improve the quality of education. Although there are high repetition rates in almost the entire region, as compared to other Third World regions, repetition tends to be even higher among students of public schools located in marginal urban areas or rural areas, from families at the lower end of the socioeconomic scale.

Scores in standardized examinations in primary education, in the six countries where they are used, indicate that the impact of problems in terms of quality of education varies. Average scores in schools where students come from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds are half or a third of what they are in schools attended by students from higher socioeconomic levels. The gap is increasing in some countries. Some characteristics of the student body –whether they are rural, indigenous, poor, children of uneducated parents or lack access to public services– are usually associated with low academic performance levels in school. A similar phenomenon occurs when measuring levels of anxiety and self-esteem. Although these results suggest possible causes of the problem of quality, further studies must be carried out to identify those causes that can be controlled (altered) systematically in order to implement the right changes and, eventually, improve the quality of education in the region.

The relative difficulty with which education systems adapt to the increasing heterogeneity, both cultural and by age, of the population served is also an expression of their limited capacity for assimilating change. It is obvious how society's rapid generation and accumulation of knowledge is increasingly removed from the slow incorporation, transmission and distribution of this knowledge via the school. The many, not always successful, attempts to update, transform, reform or renew education systems that have been sponsored by governments in the region show that this phenomenon has been clearly perceived.

Experiments with improving the quality and effectiveness of the educational process has involved four basic aspects: *administration and information; revamping curriculum and technology; training of professional staff and educational agents; and the time and resources allocated for learning.* Past efforts have often been actions that are still at an experimental stage and in such cases, it is difficult to assess their usefulness in different contexts and circumstances. In any case, it would be useful to evaluate the results of ongoing experiments in order to decide about their possible extension, adaptation or consolidation in specific situations.

Administration and Information

Managers of education systems have transferred the decision-making process or its implementation to lower levels, via legal norms or projects for decentralizing education, while seeking complete, reliable and timely information in order to deal with contradictions between local decisions and national policies. Experiments with decentralization have produced all kinds of results.

Half of the countries, including all of the larger ones, have decentralized the implementation of education programmes or transferred selected decision-making levels to the regions (states, departments or provinces) or the municipality. In general, the results have proven positive, although specific results are associated with the political context in which they were obtained, especially in countries where an overall reform of state administration has been implemented(27). The most outstanding achievements of these experiments in local participation in education administration include greater relevance of action, greater speed in solving unexpected problems and a greater contribution in terms of local resources. Allocating resources to decentralized organizations on the basis of the number of days students attend class has proven to be an incentive for increasing attendance. However, the implementation of these actions has met with serious difficulties, due to the lack of adequate administrative and legal structures and the lack of qualified personnel in the least developed regions. There has also been some resistance on the part of central staff affected by decentralization measures and the natural fear generated by any change in the way in which systems usually operate.

Given the marked differences of quality in education supply, it would perhaps be wise to complement decentralization efforts with a compensatory policy to reduce existing gaps among different counties. Such a policy would imply the allocation of more technical and financial resources to areas considered

(27) Many forms exist for implementing decentralization processes and they should be evaluated in the future. See the final report of the "Cuarta Reunión Técnica de REPLAD", held in Quito, October 1989.

priorities because of their shortages or deprivation.

Management of education systems has responded with growing flexibility to new education technology. For example, multigrade work has been encouraged since it was observed that it led to high levels of quality when proper textbooks were used and the size of the group was controlled; furthermore, the average size of the school has also increased. In a number of countries, several curricula are administered simultaneously in order to respond to varying needs, such as those in urban, rural and indigenous areas. In one country, a legal norm was approved authorizing teachers to introduce innovations into programmes, on the assumption that creativity and flexibility at the classroom level would help to improve quality. In several countries, flexible evaluation systems allow local adaptation and decision-making. Lastly, several countries initiated pre-school courses, where space was available, in primary schools (and it was not possible to provide specialized education in other institutions).

Several countries have information systems and systems for measuring academic performance at some stage of primary education and in six other countries similar systems are being designed or developed. The availability of more precise information has reduced the instances in which the teacher is forced to work with too many students (many more than the national average) and has helped to provide a better estimate of the level of repetition, seasonal absenteeism and temporary dropout. But the information already available in statistics units (or data banks) remains to be processed in order to identify a greater number of causes of these problems. SIRI will assist in improving the computer programmes already designed to perform this type of analysis and in sharing them with countries which hope to carry out similar experiments in the future. Specific research has been carried out into the causes of repetition and seasonal absenteeism, but work on these problems must continue.

There is an urgent need to improve educational information programmes for the purpose of making both decisions which affect the education system and those made by students, their families or other agents in the education system. The urgency is due to a generalized concern with obtaining the indicators needed for: follow-up to the implementation of new measures; planning of alternatives, and the ensuing decisions. Information systems should reduce the inconsistencies in the data which were pointed out above and which lessen the rationality of decisions. And emphasis on decentralization suggests that it is time for local information systems to use techniques such as the school map in order to facilitate micro-planning. On the other hand, better information might help in the articulation of demand and provide the data necessary for decision-making on the part of those concerned.

Evaluation programmes have been undertaken in six countries to analyze the quality of education in the initial grades of primary school. Tests are focused on cognoscitive performance but touch on some aspects of an emotional dimension as well. In one country, the schools and teachers are provided feedback: their averages -by item and overall- are reported back to them along with the averages of similar schools within the same region and across the country. Programmes have also been set up to establish the statistical relation between academic performance and the learning context (including variables such as the teacher's training, availability of textbooks, hunger on the part of the student, nutrition levels, timely entry into the school system, teacher's rotation, duration of the school year and physical facilities). In one country, a programme was initiated to evaluate the importance and quality of primary education on the basis of certain basic variables. But over the past two years, the emphasis in most of the member countries of the region has been on defining what is meant by education of quality, in order to develop suitable mechanisms for measuring it(28).

Updating curriculum and educational technology

Innovations have been made in curriculum and educational technology in over half of the countries of the region. Some were conceived as curricular reform and others as part of an on-going updating process. Important efforts are being carried out in: the teaching of reading, scientific thought and civic values and the use of modules, including modular evaluation to promote a student to the next grade. In almost all national action plans, high priority is given to updating curriculum and adding flexibility to reflect local realities, in terms of cultural characteristics, economic needs and opportunities for productive work at the community level.

Preparation for entry into primary school has been dominated by an integral approach

(28) A model for experimental implementation was discussed at the "Cuarta Reunión Técnica de REPLAD", held in Quito in October, 1989.

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to child development. Techniques and methodologies centered on the child's needs and activities carried out at the community level are being increasingly applied to pre-school courses. However, this progress in pre-school preparation has led to a growing gap between pre-school and primary school programmes and techniques (except in a few countries which have notably improved the quality of primary education - such as in the Escuela Nueva programme in Colombia). Renewed emphasis on the quality of primary education will doubtlessly help to resolve this problem.

Over the past few years, there has been more research and experiments dealing with more appropriate methodologies for teaching reading and writing, given the close link which exists between the learning of these two skills and successful academic performance(29). In some English-speaking Caribbean countries in particular, special efforts have been made to improve comprehension levels of both the written and spoken word. In other cases, teachers have been trained to use textbooks with detailed instructions to create learning environments and to stimulate daily activities as well as new materials and methods which are better suited to the local situation. Other countries have combined remedial reading programmes, especially in poor areas, with efforts to increase the self-esteem of students who have failed in the past. Occasionally a closer link has been encouraged between the teaching of reading and writing and the teaching of arithmetic in primary school and between literacy training for adults and community development, in an attempt to reach an integrated solution. Experimental programmes and the use of various innovative techniques have produced excellent results in the cognitive domain.

There have been especially interesting achievements in the introduction of children to scientific attitudes, processes and methods. Some experiments emphasize group work with semi-programmed textbooks which include questions that force the student to follow a sequence of observation, description and write-up, confrontation with scientific principles available in the textbook and evaluation through application to other situations. Implementation of these experiments in pilot schools which are then visited by other teachers, has proven especially successful, since this shows that it is possible to train students in scientific thought despite very limited resources. Newspaper clippings have been successfully used on index cards which are periodically reclassified and reorganized so that information can be easily retrieved - similar to the way an encyclopedia is used. Small classroom or school libraries which bright students can use for supplementary work, have also encouraged students to work on their own. In several countries, there have been science fairs and exhibitions, scientific or mathematical Olympics and debates on issues in the community which might have remedies drawn from scientific or technological principles.

Despite such results, many countries have had difficulty defining and implementing appropriate science curriculum at a level of creativity and cognoscitive development suitable for primary education, which is the only opportunity over half of the young people in the region will ever have for systematic learning. In some countries, the sciences are still seen as an activity which is only of use to students who intend to go into scientific or technical lines of work. In such instances, the clear social role of science in education in general and the importance of a scientific culture in the modern world must be made explicit. The why and how to teach science at the primary level must be addressed, based on the requirements and existing resources in each country and closer ties between general education and the labour market.

Experiments which involve student governments and students in productive and community work projects appear to have been successful in developing civic values. Rotating students (especially in small schools) through different positions of responsibility for relatively short periods (two to four months) provides each student with a personal vision of the best ways to organize the community in order to attain its goals. Activities such as these are sometimes complemented with curriculum development and planning of extra-curricular school activities.

In almost all of the member countries with significant indigenous populations, a process of intercultural bilingual education has been institutionalized or is being experimented with. This process is a result of positive experience over the last few decades in which attempts were made to provide education for the native-speaking population. There is greater awareness of: the *complex and heterogeneous linguistic and cultural reality of many of the countries of the region; the vital importance of native languages and culture as educational tools; and the need to bring indigenous populations back from the sidelines of society.*

(29) "Informe final Reunión sobre lecto-escritura como factor escolar" PICPEMCE. Mexico City, October 16-18, 1989.

This has led many governments to create specific pedagogical groups to satisfy these demands. National programmes or general directorates of bilingual education have thus been created in countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Guatemala and Mexico. Although some of them are well established and have produced positive and encouraging results, it is important to keep an eye on the development of new programmes and evaluate them in order to obtain the information necessary to design appropriate strategies. In any case, evaluation of long-standing projects with an acceptable level of technical and financial resources has shown that: *bilingual teaching does not compromise academic performance; the introduction of elements of the local culture into the curriculum generates greater motivation and has a positive effect on lowering repetition rates, absenteeism, temporary dropout or seasonal absenteeism and dropout.*

There are, however, major obstacles to the implementation of intercultural bilingual education within national education systems, forcing governments to make renewed efforts to gradually develop and spread intercultural bilingual education. Firstly, there is the difficulty of introducing native languages which are not highly standardized, into the formal pedagogical process. Secondly, the existence of variations of each native language requires field research to determine the geographical definitions within which each type of material can be used. Lastly, there is resistance to the concept of the intercultural dimension as something which involves the entire student population (including the indigenous population) and society as a whole. If these obstacles are overcome, citizens will be able to participate in all of the structures of the state and society on the basis of their linguistic and cultural identity.

Certain intercultural bilingual education programmes and projects are helping to achieve the goal of providing education of quality. However, there remains a tendency to view the intercultural dimension as something which only concerns the bilingual population, whereas in reality it should be part of all education in order to promote mutual respect, understanding and awareness. The persistence of this negative approach explains why intercultural bilingual education is often seen as an activity separate from the rest of the education system - thus reproducing the same pattern of marginality which affects the indigenous population.

Some countries have successfully introduced work by module, including modular evaluations for promoting students to the following grade and prevent them from having to repeat an entire year. This is especially important in a region where many children are absent from school at harvest time and end up repeating their year because they are unable to make up for the lost time when they return. Working by module allows students to continue with the module following their last approved module before temporarily withdrawing and means they do not have to repeat all of the material (which is often exactly what they had already studied and learned before leaving to work during harvest time). Modular evaluation has substantially reduced repetition in the cases where it has been introduced.

Along with efforts to facilitate the development of intellectual capacities, the countries have been updating curriculum with novel contents. They have ventured into new areas such as: ecology, courses in poor neighborhoods, drug prevention, AIDS, health and nutrition. The introduction of these issues presents at least two problems: the interdisciplinary approach these issues require and the scant preparation and orientation that teachers have had in order to develop them. Despite training and awareness campaigns carried out in many countries, the introduction of elements of an interdisciplinary approach has seldom succeeded, given that curriculum is organized by subject.

The countries have paid special attention to education for peace and international understanding, arousing growing interest as a result of armed conflicts in the region. Many actions have been developed around this theme, including those mentioned above on civic training and the incorporation of activities related to the moral development of the child and issues such as peace and cooperation, into the curriculum. Meetings and workshops at the national, sub-regional and regional level have been held to exchange experiences and specific materials for teachers, and radio and television programmes have been produced to promote better understanding among peoples. The approach to these issues has been emphasized in the Associated School Plan which now covers most of the countries of the region and currently includes over 300 institutions from all levels of education, from the pre-school to the secondary level.

There is consensus over the need to promote greater respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms within the framework of the process of democratization which is taking hold in the region. Activities related to peace and understanding are an important step in that direction.

Training of teachers and educational agents

Although many teachers have been

trained, the countries understand that in order to improve the quality of education, they need educational agents with better training and will have to provide teachers and administrators with real opportunities for professional training. It is noteworthy that some countries have finally succeeded in ensuring that all of their teachers have teaching certificates or degrees. Although it has not been possible to substantially improve the quality of teacher training programmes - partly due to the difficulties experienced by teachers' colleges in attracting good applicants to a profession with low pay - the countries have made efforts over the last two years to reorganize teacher training programmes. Despite these efforts, there has been little improvement or innovation in the training of teachers or those responsible for their training. For this reason, teacher training is shaping up as a priority issue that will require action.

Two-thirds of the teachers in the region have professional certificates or degrees (Table 22). The lack of trained teachers is concentrated in rural areas (it is probable that the average percentage of teachers without certificates or degrees in the region is twice as high in rural areas). Efforts to train teachers who are already working have been frustrated because once they get their certificates or degrees, they tend to move to urban areas(30). Several countries have started diagnoses on this issue and one has published a national report - developed with the collaboration of teachers' unions - on the role of teachers in society, and measures are being sought to deal with the problems described. In another country, a comparative evaluation was carried out of different training programmes with a view to improving their coordination and quality.

Better coordination, in each country, among teacher training institutions has been the principal improvement in terms of teacher training. Sharing of experience facilitates the exchange of personnel among institutions and reduces the traditional isolation of normal schools(31). A tendency has also been observed to replace training in normal schools - at the secondary and post-secondary level - with training in universities or higher education centers. Although it is hoped that this change will help teachers attain prestige comparable to that of other professionals, it is also obvious that most of the students admitted into these new teaching centers have tried to get into other university professions with more status, but have not been admitted. This type of applicant suggests that it is not possible to attract individuals with a vocation to teach (see comments below on salaries). It would appear that teacher training in universities puts more emphasis on the disciplines and training in normal schools emphasizes the teaching of those disciplines. This difference and its impact on students' performance should be examined in the future. All teacher training centers are also facing the challenge of developing new curriculum capable of offering personal contact with the many models of education which exist (different from face-to-face teacher-student teaching) or more interdisciplinary approaches. Thus, central technical bodies have been set up in many countries to support teacher training centers.

Most of the countries have made noteworthy efforts to reorganize teacher training programmes, at times setting up specific bodies to initiate and coordinate innovative activities. Many recent experiments have shown renewed interest in the methodology of distance education (in which the mail system, magazines and television are used to different degrees) in teacher training. The development of self-training modules (packages) has extended coverage to remote areas at reduced cost. And specific refresher courses for teachers are run concurrently with certification courses, using some form of distance education, for teachers without certificates or degrees who wish to move up the salary scale.

In several countries greater attention is being paid to the training of educational administrators and planners. Several training programmes have been developed - some of them decidedly innovative - at both the central and local levels. Greatest emphasis has been on personnel who, at decentralized levels, are responsible for handling specific actions directly related to the goals of schooling and literacy training. In one instance, training was provided by a prestigious national training institution and in others, they were distance education packages aimed at forming personnel in charge of administrative and supervisory work and the planning of basic education programmes, adult education programmes and literacy training, in both Latin American and English-speaking Caribbean countries.

The considerable deterioration of teachers' living and working conditions over recent years has led many teachers to leave

(30) These problems are commented on above, with reference to the countries' education policies, and are discussed once again below, with reference to teachers' salaries.

(31) Final report, Encuentro Nacional de Organismos de Perfeccionamiento y Actualización docente, Buenos Aires, March 29-31, 1989.

Table 22

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: PRE-SCHOOL AND PRIMARY EDUCATION. TEACHING STAFF BY ACADEMIC TRAINING, 1987

Country	Pre-school Education			Primary Education		
	Total teachers	Teachers without certificates or degrees		Total teachers	Teachers without certificates or degrees	
		number	percentage		number	percentage
Brazil[a]	126 322	32 117	25.4	...	...	...
Colombia	12 337	3 061	24.8	136 928	40 272	29.4
Rural areas	1 182	429	36.3	52 806	20 678	39.2
Peru[a]	13 431	5 201	38.7	108 495	46 920	43.2
Venezuela[a b]	23 178	3 268	14.1	112 157	16 667	14.9
Rural areas	3 129	556	17.8	...	...	...
El Salvador[a]	1 137	49	4.3	15 087	341	2.3
Rural areas	185	2	1.1	6 044	0	0.0
Honduras[c]	1 464	79	5.4	22 291	7 192	32.3
Rural areas	...	...	...	12 504	5 702	45.6
Nicaragua	2 454	1 606	65.4	18.317	9 250	50.5
Rural areas	542	462	85.2	8 116	5 974	73.6
Cuba	26 966	10 305[d]	38.2	73 874	11 889[e]	16.1
Aruba	74	1	1.4	281	1	0.4
Grenada	149	133	89.3	821	425[e]	51.8
Guyana[f]	...	...	...	3 444	1 214[e]	35.2
Jamaica	3 365	3 097	92.0	8 686	789	9.1
St. Kitts and Nevis	95	81	85.3	266	0	0.0
Total[g]	210 972	58 998	28.0	500 647	134 960	27.0

Source: SIRI-OREALC-Unesco Survey, 1987.

[a] 1986.

[b] "Memoria y Cuenta 1987, Ministerio de Educación de Venezuela".

[c] Honduras reported new figures for the total number of primary school teachers. For the purposes of this table, the original percentages of certification have been included in the table and used to estimate the number of teachers with and without certificates or degrees.

[d] This corresponds to "Pedagogical assistants".

[e] Empirical teachers.

[f] Public education only.

[g] This corresponds to countries which reported information.

the profession and has made it difficult to attract good students to training institutions or to hire qualified personnel willing to work in rural schools. Many teachers, often the best, leave and those who remain spend less time on education since they supplement their income by working at second jobs and so their commitment to pedagogical activities is weakened. The measures adopted to deal with this situation are aimed at providing incentives for work under difficult conditions, such as in marginal urban areas and rural areas with difficult access. In many countries, differential wage scales have been set up or the personnel are given housing subsidies. The idea of increasing incentives has been considered when no applicant with a certificate or degree applies for a specific posi-

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tion, despite the fact that there are teachers with certificates or degrees in the country who are unemployed, until a high enough level of incentives exists to attract teachers with the necessary requirements. In six member countries, incentives have taken the form of annual awards for the most outstanding teachers in the country.

Time and resources for learning

Although the economic crisis has severely reduced the resources allocated for education, the very distribution of resources within the system limits the time that can be allocated to learning and the provision of complementary elements essential to effective teacher's work. The quality of teaching is reduced when work time in school is reduced, especially in rural and marginal urban areas, to less than three hours per day and a school year to less than 100 class days(32). The factors responsible for this distressing phenomenon are well known. They include the fact that school schedules do not take harvest time into account, buildings are sometimes used for more than two shifts, rural teachers have to travel long distances to and from school when housing or meals are not available and there is little flexibility for replacing teachers who are ill or who retire during the school year. Measures for coping with these problems tend to combine the improvement of teachers' working conditions with the availability of textbooks to allow students to do work on their own, training of teachers to use textbooks, decentralization of decision-making over replacements and greater control over attendance with the support of the community.

The economic crisis has made it virtually impossible to meet any expenses other than salaries. Many institutions lack the budgetary items necessary to pay for essentials such as water and electricity. It is even more unlikely that public schools will have the funds for the upkeep of premises or for purchasing tools and supplies. Greater cooperation and exchange of experience to develop low-cost materials and the incentives of pedagogical supply companies are not enough to fill these gaps. Three countries, however, are making a special effort to provide microcomputers for schools or centers so that students can learn how to work with them.

Systematic efforts have been made in many countries to improve the quality of education in poor areas. Simple infrastructures, for example, have been created with community assistance; semi-programmed textbooks have been developed and training has been offered to teachers in multigrade schools; textbooks have been designed to encourage students to use appropriate local examples and materials have been adapted to local contexts; or new management models more suited to the local reality have been experimented with. An attempt has also been made to introduce health, nutrition and community development issues into the education process in order to create a situation that is more conducive to a child's remaining in school. Other important efforts in this area are: special teacher training programmes; incentive programmes for teachers who work in rural or marginal areas; meal programmes for students, and public opinion campaigns on underprivileged children.

A noteworthy example of high quality of education as a result of a redistribution of resources and a very small additional budget is the programme designed in Colombia for rural areas. This programme takes into account multigrade work as a whole, student government, semi-programmed textbooks, the link with the community, evaluation by module and on-going teacher training via microcentres where teachers from nearby schools can exchange experience. Similar models are being tested in other countries facing similar problems. Many specialists are now discussing the validity and extension of this type of programme.

In summary, many actions have been carried out in an attempt to improve the quality of education and reduce repetition, temporary dropout or seasonal absenteeism, dropout and failure at school, but their impact must be examined in terms of equity and effectiveness on the part of the system and their effect on the rest of society. For example, these actions are still far from being general practice and, to the extent that they affect smaller population groups, they exasperate existing disparities. But there is consensus on the fact that the socioeconomic deterioration ensuing from the crisis has had a negative impact on teachers' motivation. Yet available resources that might be better used are wasted to a certain extent. Which is why it is important to ensure that, eventually, administrators be accountable to public opinion for their actions.

(32) Out of these 300 hours of class work per year, it is likely that 50% are spent on administrative activities which do not provide systematic learning experience. This situation can be compared to the 220 actual days of class work in Europe with a minimum of 6 hours per day, or 1,440 hours of class work, 70 to 80% of which is spent on learning experiences.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOME CARIBBEAN PRIMARY AND ALL-AGE SCHOOLS

Olga James-Reid (*)

This paper starts from certain fundamental premises that the management of educational resources is a crucial determinant of the quality of education taking place in schools as is the availability of resources themselves; that certain resource conditions must exist as prerequisites for management activities; that given comparable resources, an important difference between a productive and non-productive or less productive school lies in the way resources are managed. It is possible to prepare school leaders for the task of resource management and development.

These premises acknowledge the limitations of educational resources in developing countries such as the Caribbean, and their effects on the process of schooling, acknowledge the constraints within which school leaders must operate, none-the-less, imply that an understanding of the range of resources available to schools, and the development of skills in their mobilizaton and management can go a far way in determining outcomes.

This assumption suggests the existence of a close relationship between the phenomenon of management and that of resources –both available and potential– and even more significantly, between management and the development and utilization of these resources in accordance with established goals of the school, thus aligning the schools productivity with the management of resources - a debatable situation, given the numerous other influences on schools.

This perspective requires a critical approach which this paper proposes to take, as it examines educational resources in primary and all- age schools in eight Caribbean territories, under four categories, namely finance, physical facilities, material and equipment, and human resources.

This paper starts with a discussion of the nature and purpose of educational resources, highlights the scope of resources management, gives a brief overview of educational systems operating in certain Caribbean territories, examines educational resources in the eight territories under discussion, determines some aspects of management and development as practised in the territories, and concludes with a reflection upon the role school leaders can play in developing countries in mobilizing, managing and developing resources for more effective schools.

Nature and Purpose of Educational Resources

The specific purpose of schools is to help people learn, the quality of the learning experience and the product of schooling are the results of the constant interaction of a number of forces within and outside the school of which resources play an important part.

The schools's resources include the physical environment-school plant and facilities, material supplies and equipment, finance and human resources. All these, working together, guided by meaningful goals and objectives and with the appropriate skills of management, are likely to effect desirable changes in students.

Although some learning takes place anywhere, there is need to have the most favourable conditions to encourage optimum learning, and school buildings are intended to provide such conditions. Through their design,

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facilities and space, the teaching-learning process can either be enhanced or hindered.

Taylor and Vlastos (1975) in emphasising the importance of the school's physical environment point out that it makes a difference in the behaviour and learning of children. Knirk (1979) suggests that the physical plant be stimulating to the learner and should ease the teaching-learning tasks (Brown 1983) believing that the physical facilities selected should offer a congenial and functional environment for learning activities states:

"The learning environment affects the performance of students and teachers in many different ways. Fixed spaces and immovable furniture and walls, for example, often freeze teaching methods and curriculum goals in undesirable, unsatisfying ways. On the other hand, functionally varied, modifiable, well equipped spaces will free thinking and activity and encourage the highly prized flexibility that much of modern teaching requires." (p. 11)

The Minister of Education in Jamaica (1982) after observing the conditions of some schools, remarked that no one could possibly expect effective learning to take place in buildings that were dark, airless, hot, dusty, congested and non-functional in every way for both teachers and students.

This observation is not unique to the Jamaican schools, it is a picture of schools in many developing countries. What does this mean for the kind of teaching and learning taking place in such institutions?

The school's physical facilities comprise spatial factors such as classrooms with furniture, storage space, display facilities and activity areas, common learning areas like auditorium, libraries; support areas such as canteen, lunch room, sanitary facilities, staff rooms. It also comprises certain conditions such as lighting, acoustics and ventilation.

It is not the intention of this paper to discuss in any detail the various physical facilities of the school, but it is important to note that insofar as the lack of adequate facilities is a distration factor in the teaching-learning situation, it requires serious attention. Discomfort caused by excessive cold or heat, glare or shadows, noise level or overcrowding, or poor seating arrangements, is one which cannot be ignored because of its negative influence on learning, so removing or minimising the cause of discomfort can go a far way in encouraging the attention of students to the learning tasks at hand.

Available space in classrooms for storage, project corners, display facilities, reading corners, for example, can be used to great advantage by the innovative teacher.

Instructional material is any medium of communication used by the teacher and learner to effect learning. These materials are largely visual and auditory, such as library books, audio-visual aids, television, slides, film strips, flat pictures, maps, real objects and community resources. It is believed that careful selection and use of materials can in a significant way motivate learners to respond to instruction. Brown (1975) expresses it thus, "Creative and effective use of learning resources increases the probability that students will learn more, retain better what they learn and improve their performance of the skills they are expected to develop..."

Wittich and Schuller (1979) in their support of the use of instructional media state:

"Like instruction, learner responses can be more exciting when a variety of media is used. When more information is communicated by learning media, teachers can give more attention to the uniquely human aspects of education, to understanding the needs of individual students, helping them to set and realize goals and stimulate them to use the information available from educational media." (p. 2)

One is not here talking about the use of media and material for their own sake; very little if any worthwhile result is likely to occur if media are used merely as indicator that the teacher is working. The type of material used, and how they are used, should be determined by the learning goals and objectives, the students –their intellectual capacities and divergent interests and background– the available material and equipment; physical facilities such as electrical outlets and available space. Failure to take these into consideration should result in the selection and use of educational media and material inappropriate for the task.

Community resources as instructional material have great potential for motivating learning. These resources are the people, places of interest, materials and services that are available and accessible from the immediate and neighbouring communities, for the learning experiences of students. Providing opportunities for students to become involved in their social and natural environment is in effect giving them primary source of learning, and community resources study provides such an opportunity to students to have first-hand experiences with natural things like plants, soil, rivers, caves, forest; and man-made ones like organizations, buildings, communities. Such activities are made possible through planned activities, such as walking trips and hikes, field trips, tours, excursions, and individual and group activities focusing on particular areas of interest.

To get the most from community resources it is important to develop clear and relevant objectives; what is worth knowing? what must be achieved? what must be done to achieve them? are crucial questions. A visit to the park, market, a church, a cave or a field; to a family or a particular community group, entails as much planning or even more than would be required for any serious classroom project.

People are important instructional resources; it is necessary that the teacher know the range of these community resources so as to utilize their talents in learning activities. Resource people may be invited to make presentations to students on particular areas of interest –health, security, agriculture, banking– or arrangements can be made for students to visit them.

Other resources such as raw material for art and crafts, specimens for history, science or social studies lessons, for example, can be collected from the community.

Services provided by the community can be utilized in training activities; the work-study programme in operation in many schools enables worthwhile learning experiences. The use of community resources for the purpose of security and for financial support to school is well known in many areas.

Schools in developing countries as in the Caribbean, given the reality of financial constraints, operate without the benefits of a number of resources available to their counterparts in developed countries. The problem of space, facilities, material, equipment and furniture is one with which school administrators must grapple each day and with various results. Some seem to "go under" succumbing to the weight, the struggle and frustration; they do very little as they watch their schools deteriorate. Others "keep school" maintaining a state of equilibrium, perhaps taking literally Sarason's view that the more things change the more they remain the same; they do very little if anything at all to "rock the boat". Still others "run school", seeing themselves in control they assess the limitations of resources, the potential for resources, then plan, organize and mobilize them in the interest of the school's goals.

This is the position with which this paper wishes to identify, based on the firm belief that the main difference between schools lies in their leadership.

Inadequacy of resources is a reality in primary and all-age schools in the Caribbean, and there is no doubt that much more needs to be done by the various Ministries of Education to provide well-needed facilities and other resources in the schools, if expected goals are to be realized. The thrust of this paper, however, is moreso with what happens in schools with what is available, than with the Ministry's role in its provision.

Human resources are the most important component influencing the learning process and hence school effectiveness. Castetter (1982) in full support of the contribution of the human element to school achievement, wrote:

"... The extent to which public education succeeds will depend largely on the quality of the personnel engaged in the educative process and upon the effectiveness with which they discharge individual and group responsibilities...

The most crucial single element in the educative process is the people charged with the task of effecting desirable changes in children and youth." (pp. 4-5)

Bernadis (1954) much earlier emphasised this point very well when he stated that no matter how well planned a line and staff organization may be, no matter how many dollars are spent in the school budget for materials and equipment, the factor that will make or break the effectiveness of any department in a school system is the human factor.

What makes for quality staff? A technical response might point to the nature demand of the job, might specify required skills, competence, knowledge; but essential as these are, any definition of quality which ignores fundamental human and psychological dimensions such as needs satisfaction, motivational level, work attitude and level of commitment will be at best inadequate.

Given the relationship between staff quality and students' learning, encouraging and maintaining quality should be a priority of every school administrator. A personnel programme which gives serious attention to selection, orientation, supervision, staff development and evaluation can influence in a significant way the quality of staff.

A brief description of educational systems operating in the eight Caribbean territories under study might be a useful guide in understanding the context in which subsequent discussions on resources management will be based.

The Education Systems

The eight territories are Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Trinidad.

A centralized system of education operates in all territories. There is a Ministry of Education which is the policy-making, planning and implementing body responsible for all aspects of education. A statement from the Barbados Ministry of Education (1984) is applicable to all:

"The Ministry of Education is responsible for... educational policy, planning and implementing in respect of all levels and stages of public education, including curriculum and instruction inspection and supervision, general administration, teacher preparation and certification, personnel management."

This centralization has resulted in structures that are basically similar; any difference observed tends to be a function of size and/or educational goals than anything else.

There is a Minister of Education, usually an elected Member of Parliament, appointed by the Prime Minister as head of the Ministry with responsibility for education within the country. This includes the promotion of education, framing of educational policies, the establishment of a coordinated educational system to meet the needs of the society, and the execution of educational policies.

The Minister is assisted by a team of administrative and professional officers of whom the Permanent Secretary (PS) is chief administrator responsible for the structuring of the Ministry to facilitate the best possible educational results.

The PS is assisted by a number of officers (which varies with the size of the system), each responsible for sections of the structure. One officer common to all territories is the Chief Education Officer (CEO) who is the chief technical and professional officer with responsibility for the implementation of educational policies at all levels of the system.

Although centralization should serve to facilitate closer coordination of resources and activities, enable information processing for more effective decision-making, and encourage closer control, experience in some educational systems seems not to be supportive of these aims. Many are said to be "bogged down" by red tape, are slow and inefficient, and schools far from the centre of operations are at a great disadvantage.

The Jamaican attempt in 1975 to decentralize the system by establishing four regional offices in different parts of the island was a timely move aimed at encouraging a more efficient system of management, by bringing support and supervisory services closer to schools and reducing communication lag between schools and the Ministry. Reports from schools, however, seem to indicate that these regional offices are failing to meet expected needs, due to inadequate resources at these centres and to the fact that real decision-making authority still resides in Kingston at the Head Office - a practice which serves to reinforce the long-standing communication lag and non-decision-making.

In all eight territories the major responsibility for education resides with the State, although Independent schools play a significant role. In some states like Belize, Grenada, St. Lucia and Trinidad, there is a strong Church-State partnership in the ownership and management of schools, and government schools –those fully owned and managed by the State– are few. In other states - Barbados, Dominica St. Kitts and Jamaica, government schools are in the mejority. Even in those states with a strong Church-State partnership, government is the chief financier of education. Its financial responsibility ranges from one hundred percent public funding in government schools to grants -in-aid to government-aided denominational schools. Such aid includes teachers' salaries, sizeable contribution to the running costs of these schools, capital grant for new buildings, furniture and equipment and for the maintenance of buildings.

Operating against the background of the foregoing discussion which highlights informed views on school resources generally and their contribution to the educative process; which recognizes the constraints posed by inadequate resources in the schools; which deals with certain assumptions pertaining to the interaction between the schools' resources and its management and suggests that greater mileage can be achieved with limited resources under skilled management; and which highlights the administrative context in which the schools operate, an instrument was developed and administered to a small sample of principals and teachers in primary and all-age schools in the eight Caribbean territories mentioned.

One of its aims was to identify the resources available to schools, the state of these resources and how they were managed and utilized. Secondly, on the basis of the findings and given the benefits derived from research, to reflect on alternate perspectives for the mobilization, management and development of educational resources in the schools.

The Research

Through a descriptive survey data were gathered from one hundred and nine (109) principals, 52% of the questionnaires distributed, and two hundred and twenty-three (223) teachers 55%, in the eight territories previously named (Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, Trinidad)

All but two of the territories, Dominica and St. Kitts, were visited by the researcher, and where possible, questionnaires were administered in schools directly to principals and teachers, others however, were administered by a contact person.

Two sets of questionnaires, one for teachers with twenty-three (23) questions and one for principals with fifty-one (151) questions sought responses to various aspects of the school's resources, their management and development. In addition to the data obtained from the schools, much use was made of documents from the various Ministries of Education - a rich complement to the field data.

No attempt was made at randomization; given the nature and aim of the study a random sample was not a serious necessity, but a most pertinent consideration was the difficulty involved in obtaining data from a wide geographical area. The sample therefore is a convenient one, responses were obtained from those who were willing and available. Some attempt was made to have responses from rural and urban schools.

The sample is limited not only in terms of the bias inherent in this sampling method but also in terms of its size which did not increase appreciably in spite of follow-up requests for the return of questionnaires, and some of those received could not be used due to serious state of incompletion.

Although a sample survey more rigorously conducted would enable one to make more reliable inferences concerning school resources in the territories, and this quality is lacking, these findings can provide an insight of existing conditions and can be used as useful indicators for change. They can also provide direction for future direction for future research.

Five areas of concern examined through a number of research questions are:

1. What are the resources available to schools?
2. How are resources managed?
3. What is being done to develop resources?
4. What are some major problems confronting schools?
5. What can be done to improve conditions in schools?

Findings

Resources Available to Schools

Finance

Sixty percent of the schools examined are church schools and forty percent government.

The major responsibility for financing education resides with the government even in those states where a strong church-state partnership in education exists.

The problem of finance was indicated as one of the obstacles to schooling in the territories, determining the amount and quality of physical facilities and, furniture, teacher load, and the supply of material and equipment. Frequent fund-raising activities as a means of supplementing government's finance was cited as a problem interupting the school's academic programme in some territories, especially so in Jamaica and Dominica where 57% and 60% of the responses respectively, indicated their engagement in fund-raising activities 'often'.

Funds so obtained are used for a variety of purposes but chiefly so for teaching material, equipment and school supplies, for extra-curricula activities and students' welfare. Other purposes such as sanitation, library, minor repairs, furniture, security and community outreach are indicated to a lesser extent.

Buildings, Space

In responding to a question on the condition of buildings and the adequacy of space, 11% of the respondents reported buildings in good condition, 51% in fair condition and 38% said buildings badly needed repairs.

PERCENTAGE REPORTING CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

Groups	Badly Needs Repairs	Fair Condition	Good Condition
Total	38	51	11
Barbados	50	50	–
Belize	25	67	8
Dominica	20	40	40
Grenada	80	10	10
Jamaica	39	61	–
St. Kitts	–	60	40
St. Lucia	50	40	10
Trinidad	20	50	30

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Adequacy of space

Generally there is a serious problem of school space in all territories, 43% of all schools reported overcrowded condition with Grenada the highest 80%, St. Lucia and Barbados next with 50% respectively.

PERCENTAGE RESPONDING TO SPACE ADEQUACY

Groups	Overcrowded	Adequate	Excess Space
Total	43	49	8
Barbados	55	45	–
Belize	36	64	–
Dominica	40	60	–
Grenada	70	30	–
Jamaica	39	48	13
St. Kitts	40	60	–
St. Lucia	60	40	–
Trinidad	30	60	10

Although the responses for Trinidad 30%, and Jamaica 39%, indicated overcrowding, in both cases excess space was also reported in some schools.

Sixty-four percent of the teachers reported that due to overcrowding, classes were sometimes held elsewhere other than in classrooms. Areas such as the shade of trees, old sheds, church vestrys, verandahs of teachers' cottages were indicated.

ADEQUACY OF FACILITIES, FURNITURE, TEACHING MATERIALS
(Reported in %)

Categories	Total	Barbados	Belize	Dominica	Grenada	Jamaica	St. Kitts	St. Lucia	Trinidad
Facilities									
Adequate	13	33	6	–	–	30	40	–	–
Inadequate	56	34	65	50	30	48	40	60	70
Extremely Inadequate	31	33	29	50	70	22	20	40	30
Furniture									
Adequate	27	20	42	40	–	4	4	20	50
Inadequate	59	60	50	40	60	74	60	80	50
Extremely Inadequate	14	20	8	20	40	22	–	–	–
Teaching Material									
Adequate	20	30	36	20	10	4	40	–	30
Inadequate	59	59	50	60	50	70	60	70	70
Extremely Inadequate	21	21	14	20	40	26	–	30	–

Table indicates that of the available facilities, furniture and teaching material, only 13, 27% and 20% of respondents respectively checked the response category "adequate". This means that 87% of the responses for facilities, 73% for furniture and 78% for teaching material indicated inadequacy in these areas.

Facilities were seen as extremely inadequate. Of the facilities, provision for library, store-room and staff-room was the most popular as indicated by 55%, 46% and 44% of the responses respectively.

EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Categories	Percentage Indicating Availability
Radio	62
Tape Recorder	50
Projector	8
Record Player	22
Piano	28
Television	12
Library	55
Canteen	23
Tuckshop	22
Staff-Room	44
Auditorium	16
Store-Room	46
Lunch-Room	11

The most common equipment used are radio checked by 62%, followed by tape recorder 50%, piano, record player, television and projector were others checked in descending order of frequency.

Inadequate supply of equipment is indicated throughout even for the most accessible gadget, the radio.

The 't' test results indicated a significant difference at the .05 level between rural and urban schools in the supply of equipment, urban schools being in a better position than their rural counterparts. Difference was also indicated between government and church schools in the provision of equipment and facilities, with government schools having a higher supply than church schools.

The problem of understaffing occurs in all territories to a greater or lesser extent as indicated by responses ranging from 40% for Jamaican to 50% for Trinidad. Some overstaffing is also reported 22% responded for Jamaica, 20% for St. Lucia and 8% for Belize. The situation is possibly due to a combination of reasons, such as school management policies, educational policy which causes shifts in student population but no concomitant shift among teachers.

It is important that these three countries have the highest pupil-teacher ratio in the sample.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the group reported a "fully-staffed" position, 25% "understaffed" and 9% "overstaffed".

LEVEL OF STAFFING

(Percentage reporting level of staffing)

Groups	Under Staffed	Full Staffed	Over Staffed	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Total Groups	25	66	–	–
Barbados	10	90	–	1:30
Belize	34	58	8	1:40
Dominica	20	80	–	NA
Grenada	10	90	–	NA
Jamaica	4	74	22	1:55
St. Kitts	20	80	–	1:30
St. Lucia	30	50	20	1:60
Trinidad	50	50	–	1:25

Staffing policy as it relates to the pupil-teacher ratio, differs widely among the territories ranging from 1:25 in Trinidad to 1:60 in St. Lucia, this makes equitable comparison difficult. A report of "understaffing" or "overstaffing" therefore, must be interpreted in terms of each country's pupil-teacher ratio, than in relationship to other territories.

STAFF QUALIFICATION - PRINCIPALS
(Percentage indicating qualification)

N	Groups	Trained Teachers	Univer. Certifi.	1st. Degree	Diploma Education	Special Training for Principalship
109	Tot. Groups	92	20	13	4	31
10	Barbados	100	20	10	–	10
36	Belize	94	17	8	6	14
5	Dominica	80	40	20	–	–
10	Grenada	90	10	10	10	50
23	Jamaica	96	17	22	–	–
5	St. Kitts	100	20	–	–	60
10	St. Lucia	70	40	20	–	60
10	Trinidad	90	20	10	10	60

Ninety-two percent of all principals in the sample are trained teachers, 13% have a first degree; 31% have special training for the principalship.

Trinidad, St. Kitts and St. Lucia reported the highest percentage with special training for the principalship as indicated by 60% of the group in each territory.

Since no attempt was made to determine the nature and length of the training it is difficult to make any worthwhile comparison between territories.

STAFF QUALIFICATION - TEACHERS
(Percentage of teachers indicating qualification)

N	Groups	Pre-Trained	Trained Teachers	University Certificate	1st. Degree
223	Total Groups	12	88	8	4
20	Barbados	0	100	15	5
20	Belize	10	90	5	–
10	Dominica	50	50	10	0
40	Grenada	35	65	12	–
50	Jamaica	2	98	6	14
10	St. Kitts	40	60	10	–
28	St. Lucia	36	64	18	–
45	Trinidad	0	100	–	–

Eighty-eight percent of the teachers are trained, 12% pre-trained. No pre-trained teacher is indicated in the sample for Barbados and Trinidad and there is only 2% for Jamaica, Dominica, St. Kitts, St. Lucia and Grenada reported the highest number of pre-trained teachers.

Summary

Inadequate resources is a common phenomenon in all territories. Finance is limited, buildings, generally are in poor condition except for a small percentage. There is a serious problem of overcrowding, and furniture, equipment, material and facilities are in short supply.

The teaching staff in terms of numbers and required basic training, presents the most favourable picture, yet there is understaffing as indicated by 25% of the group and a 12% cohort of pretrained teachers. In terms of qua-

lity as indicated by level of training and qualification for the principalship, 31%, indicating special training, is at best a very meagre attempt, given the demands of the job.

Community Resources

The teachers' responses, to items on school-community relationship were less than favourable, only 41% felt that there was good working relationship and 42% that there was utilization of community resources. The suggestion of an active Parent/Teachers Association (PTA) was agreed to by 52%. Many respondents showed much indecision in this area, choosing frequently the response category "Am not sure".

The principals, however, were more positive in their responses, 80% agreed that there was good school-community relationship and 76% agreed with the suggestion of an active PTA.

What could be responsible for this difference in perception? Is it that the principals' close involvement bias their perception? Or does the teachers' distance prevent a fuller knowledge of what is taking place? Whatever explanation is given it seems clear that community resources are not being tapped to their fullest.

How are Resources Managed and Developed?

The question of resources management and development takes into consideration communication and supervisory methods, and selection practices.

The administrative team varies widely in schools depending on the size and may include principal, vice-principal, grade coordinators, senior teachers and librarian, but the most frequent group is the principal with vice-principal and senior teachers, some of whom are grade co-ordinators. Since vice-principals are only assigned to schools of a certain size it is understandable that they are not a part of the first group.

Seventy-four percent of the teachers indicated a clear understanding of what is expected on the job. They selected staff meetings, discussion with principals, with fellow-teachers and to a lesser extent their own experience, as the most common means of information.

It is of interest to note that widely used methods such as orientation, bulletin boards, seminars and the use of other members of the administrative team such as vice-principals, grade coordinators, were not frequently selected. Could this be a question of delegation?

If teachers are clearly informed, as indicated by 74% of the responses, then it could be that principal-teacher interaction through planning as noted by 66% of the responses, and the tendency to encourage and consider teachers' ideas and opinions (65% responses) could have contributed to the level of clarification despite the failure to make more use of other methods.

The principal is the chief supervisor in the school as is indicated by 76% of the responses. Education officer is next having 40% responses. Seven percent of the sample said they had no supervision.

In response to a question about the frequency of supervision given by the Ministry's officials, one visit per year was the most frequently checked by 42% of the principals, followed by three visits 25%. Although visits were infrequent, 71% of the principals felt that some help was derived from them.

With respect to teacher supervision, 95% of the principals said they gave teachers guidance and supervision on the job, but only 57% of the teachers agreed that weak teachers were given guidance on the job to improve their skills.

Of the nine supervisory methods listed, the four most frequently cited are staff meetings, lesson plans, principal-teacher discussion and classroom observation.

SUPERVISORY METHODS USED

(Percentage teachers indicating supervisory methods)

Methods	% Response
Observation of classrroom practice	55
Staff Meetings	97
Staff-development-Seminars, workshops	34
Lesson plans preparation	73
Lesson plans - vetting	33
Teacher Evaluation	49
Discussion - principal/teacher/supervisor	64
Ministry's Seminars on Curr. guide etc.	48
Grade meetings	40

Although 70% of the principals selected workshops and seminars as regular staff development practices only 34% of the teachers so indicated. Disagreement of opinion was also shown with evaluation, 89% of the principals saying they were so engaged as compared to 49% of the teachers.

Insufficient time was cited by the principals as the factor preventing adequate teacher supervision and development, since 64% of the sample carried out full-time teaching duties, 20% part-time, only 16% had no prescribed teaching assignment.

Teacher Selection Practices

In some territories, such as Barbados and Belize, teachers are classified as civil servants while in others e.g. Jamaica they are not, and to some extent this classification determines the selection practices. All applications for jobs in Belize, for example, are sent directly to the Services Commission who must be contacted by school managers when teachers are required for schools. Managers are given the opportunity to select from the available pool, and teachers are assigned to schools where jobs are available. Transfers are also made by managers to areas of need and it is not unusual for a teacher to be assigned to another school without the benefit of consultation.

In Jamaica, school boards are legal entities acting on behalf of the Ministry of Education, with authority to manage the school as prescribed by the Education Act. Each school has a board and application for jobs are sent directly to the Board, of which the Principal is a member. Usually, job announcements specify that applications be sent to the Board in care of the Principal, who begins the screening process. Some boards even delegate the selection process to the Principal. Once selection is made the Board acting as agent of the Ministry, appoints the teacher to the particular school and position for which he applied.

Applications for administrative positions such as those of the principal and vice principal, are dealt with directly by the Board which is required to short-list the three most suitable candidates for submission to the Ministry of Education, with all necessary information including ratings of each. The Ministry through the Services Commission makes the final selection.

Although interviews are an integral part of the selection process for key administrative positions, it is not a frequent practice for teacher selection; very often application forms and reference letters and/or recommendation and intuition are the only selection guide. It is not unusual to find many a good teacher being out-selected by their less able colleagues.

Principals when asked to indicate criteria for selecting staff to senior positions such as those of vice-principalship, grade coordinator and senior teachers, gave as most frequent criteria 1) experience and age, 2) qualification, 3) seniority. Leadership ability and performance were the least frequently named.

Major Problems Confronting Schools

The problems discussed here are those indicated by administrators and teachers. Administrative problems are many and varied and an attempt is made to arrange them into categories as shown in next table.

PROBLEMS AS REPORTED BY ADMINISTRATORS

	Frequency	Description
1. Staff Related	108	Teacher uncooperativeness, tardiness, unpunctuality and absenteeism; poor work attitude, attrition, low level of competence
2. Organizational	66	Numerous administrative and secretarial duties. Lack of time teaching responsibility; work overload.
3. Inadequate Resources	64	Poor condition of buildings; poor sanitary facilities; overcrowding. Lack of funds, inadequate materials, equipment etc.
4. Ministry of Education	57	Policies, e.g. shift system; teacher selection practices, school size, tardiness with grants and maintenance. Poor communication; non-supportiveness
5. School/Community	40	Lack of support, interruptions, vandalism, parent/school conflict.
6. Student related	25	Indiscipline, poor attendance. Learning problems, lack of learning materials e.g. books, pens.

Staff-related problems, the first on the list, was identified 108 times. Most common of these problems are teacher tardiness, uncooperativeness, low motivation and low level of competence.

The complexity of management with numerous duties, some of which are regarded as "administrivia" lead to serious work overload. Added to these are the numerous secretarial duties, and for most principals full-time or part-time teaching assignments. Lack of time for the supervision of the curriculum and teachers was noted as a consequence.

Other problem areas cited are inadequate resources, relationship with the Ministry of Education, school-community relationship and student related problems.

Though not high on the list, the frequent fund-raising activities of some schools was seen as a problem interrupting the academic programme by claiming much of the teachers' and students' time.

Major problems affecting the teachers' job

The teachers saw certain organizational conditions as major obstacles - Inadequate classroom space, poor and inadequate facilities, furniture and teaching material; large classes; poor working conditions, especially as they relate to sanitary conveniences and staffroom facilitities were noted.

Problems with pupils were next; these include poor attendance, indiscipline, certain learning problems; and lack of materials such as books and pencils.

Problems with parents and community, with administration, with fellow teachers and with the Ministry of Education were also cited.

Suggestions for Improvement

Although not in the same order of importance, principal and teachers were consistent in their suggestions for improvement. Highest on the principals' list is the need for change in teacher behaviour in terms of performance, punctuality, attitude etc. followed by the suggestion for change in the Ministry's policies as pertained to finance, facilities, salary, staffing.

Teachers saw improvement in organization conditions especially physical condition of work as highest priority, followed by improvement in administration e.g. more effective leadership, improved principal-teacher relationship.

The need for training - for personal and professional development was seen by both groups as necessary.

Reflections & Commentaries

The findings though not conclusive provide an insight of the existing conditions pertaining to educational resources in primary and all-age schools in some Caribbean territories.

Financial physical and human resources were examined and there is serious inadequacy in all areas.

The following conditions were highlighted

- Frequent fundraising activities are means of supplementing the governments grants to school, and such funds are necessary to maintain many of the school's activities, however the programmes of the school are being affected by the time lost to fund raising activities.
- Buildings are in poor condition generally, only 11% of the responses reported buildings in good condition. There is a serious state of overcrowding in schools. Facilities generally are very inadequate staffroom, for example, is available to only 44% of the respondents and school library to 55%. Radio is the most common educational media and this was reported by only 62% of the sample.

Both teaching material and furniture are inadequate. These are all organizational conditions which present greatest problems for teachers.

- Teacher qualifications give a more favourable picture, 88% are trained teachers, and 8% have university certificate, 4% first degree. This is a significant stride for the Caribbean, given the long history of pretrained teachers and an educational policy which did not recognize - for remuneration - university graduates as teachers in primary and all-age schools.

Qualification for the principalship presents much concern, only 31% reported special training for the job.

- There is much scope for the mobilization of community resources even the traditional PTA is operating below expectations.
- Much scope also exists in the schools for the use of the total administrative team. The principal is presented as the one almost single handedly in charge.
- Administrative activities as they relate to teacher supervision and development are minimal and there seems to be the need for clarification in this area, given the difference of opinion between principals and teachers with respect to the nature and the purpose of the principals supervisory efforts.

- There is a wide range of information and supervisory methods not being used in schools, any attempt to help school leaders acquire skills in utilizing these methods would be a move in the right direction.
- Teacher selection and promotion practices based more on personal characteristics, suchs as age and seniority than on competence and requirements of the job, cannot adequately provide the kind of manpower that is needed for the schools; but how prepared are principals to move beyond traditional methods and can they afford to do so given the shortage of qualified teachers in some areas?
- Principals are bugged down by numerous administrative, clerical and teaching duties, a demand on time preventing them from giving serious attention to curriculum and staff development matters. There is a need not only to relieve principals of some of these responsibilities but to prepare them for the role of resource management and development.
- The major category of problems confronting principals is that of staff. How to manage staff to reduce the numerous problems identified seems a priority.
- The Ministries of Education as a source of problem for both principals and teachers with respect to policies and relationship, is one requiring serious attention.

Education is bussiness, in that its returns depend largely on its investment-quantitatively and qualitatively. Like business, the quality of its output is a reflection of the management operating in the organization. Unlike business however, returns are long term and very often cannot be assessed in quantitative terms, a situation which seems to de-emphasize the urgency to invest in accordance with expectations, and this is not without deleterious effects on educational processes and products.

The gloomy picture of resource provisions in the primary and all age schools discussed is one that may be attributed to three conditions:

- Inadequate financing by the various governments.
  Some of the present problems have resulted from seeds sown many years before; while others are due to the current state of finance in the economy which limits the amount available for education.
- The priority placed on education viz-a-viz other sectors of the economy. Until expressed purposes and goals of education are matched by expenditures for education the outcomes are lileky to be disappointing.
- The management of educational resources.
  Many of the ills of organization are due to ineffective management and the school is no exception. Management is necessary to keep the organization together and enable it to achieve its goals by mobilizing and integrating resources, and by motivating efforts.
  Where this quality of management is lacking in schools, the essential ingredient for resource viability is lost.

Despite the reality of resource inadequacy, some schools are much better off than others, not only in terms of performance, but also in their physical environment, social climate, and in their approach to dealing with available resources.

Given similar set of circumstances, these schools more than their counterparts, have been able to mobilize available resources, and structure the organization in such a way to utilize them to their fullest. Dramatic changes have taken place in some of these schools; teachers seem to discover a new source of responsibility and commitment, students long demotivated, have come alive with new zeal and interest for learning; communities which for years stood by and watched as the schools were vandalized are now actively engaged in supporting the schools' efforts, as they repaint schools, repair furniture, engage in fund raising activities and put in place security system.

It is this kind of management that schools need so as to take control and make things happen. This however, is done by a minority group which seems to possess abilities and expertise, initiative, a desire to innovate, and a strong sense of purpose and determination not common to many people. The demands of school management even with available resources, is such a monumental task that to effectively manage without, makes for even greater demand.

The place of training is important here, although it must not be seen as a panacea for all the school's ills, it can impact in a significant way on the behaviour of principals to make a difference in the schools. The Ministries of Education need to take a more decisive stand with respect to leadership training to ensure more competent principals in the schools.

If management is to be seen in terms of resources mobilization and integration, then one must assume the availability of resources. This has not been the case in the school systems discussed, the level of inadequacy is high.

We are reminded by Taylor and Vlastos

(1975) Knirk (1979) and Brown (1983) of the importance of the physical environment in stimulating learning and behaviour. If governments are serious about education and its outcomes then serious attention must be given to increasing the budgetary allocation to ensure more adequate resource provisions to the schools.

School leaders need to develop strategies for more effective management of available resources in the schools and communities. Rich community resources in terms of people, places of interest, materials and services can be utilized in a meaningful way in the school's programmes.

A strong school community partnership is encouraged. As partners in education communities which include business and industrial groups, service clubs etc.; and the school, can work together to meet some of the schools' specific needs as well as some common goals. Community groups may provide finance, provide opportunity for students to learn as individuals and groups from experiences in their organizations, share in classroom practice through career talks, or teaching of specific classes. Note for example, an expert from a Computer firm might be useful in instructing students in computer use. Other groups may adopt a school thus making meaningful contribution to aspects of the school's life; sponsor a special event, donate material for recycling - wasted computer paper, scraps from a garment factory for example-, can be used to great advantage in the school.

The schools own resources, members of its administrative team especially, can be used to fuller advantage especially in the areas of staff supervision and development which should be an integral part of the school's programme.

Skills learnt by students can be applied in the school, e.g. in repairs of furniture and fixtures. It is not unknown to have school projects eg. poultry farm, piggery, crafts, whereby students develop a sense of business and industry as they participate in cash earning projects, here the use of some of the school's resources are enhanced and returns so obtained provide needed amenities.

Opportunities provided for participation in decision making, for expression of initiative, for the involvement of all concerned with the school can create the kind of climate of good will and togetherness which encourages not only most effort and productivity but an interest in providing and securing school resources.

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONS OF THE ATLANTIC COAST OF NICARAGUA: EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS

Massimo Amadio (*)

It is not the purpose of this study to provide an evaluation of the "Bilingual Intercultural Education Programme" (hereafter called the PEBI), which operates in the northern autonomous regions (teaching Miskito-Spanish and Sumo-Spanish) and in the southern autonomous regions (teaching English-Spanish) of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, but rather to describe the situation there and identify priority areas, towards which external assistance could be directed. To this effect, relevant documentation was consulted, contacts were established with authorities and technical staff of the Ministry of Education (MED) at the central level, at the regional (Puerto Cabezas) and at the zone level (Rosita). The supporting activities carried out by researchers and collaborators of the Research and Documentation Centre of the Atlantic Coast (CIDCA), their suggestions and opinions, have also been taken into account.

Generally speaking, it was considered appropriate to describe and analyze PEBI's progress not only in the light of the specific context of the country, but also in the light of experiences carried out in other Latin American countries. In effect, a bilingual education undertaking faces similar and general problems despite a variety of situations and specific dynamics; and secondly, the numerous activities undertaken in this field over the last two decades make up a solid fund of knowledge and lessons, which could benefit more recent efforts.

The first part of this document provides a brief description of the context in which PEBI works, its background and main characteristics (principles, organization, coverage, personnel, curricula, methodology, materials, evaluation and systematization activities). In the second part, an analysis is made of the areas, which require special attention in the Programme, and which could be considered for possible external technical and financial support.

Two main features of the PEBI programme should be kept in mind from the outset in order to fully understand its development.

The Programme is the first in Nicaragua to take into account the languages spoken on the Atlantic Coast (mainly Miskito, Sumo and Creole English) and integrate them in formal primary education. Therefore, when the Programme started, it had no prior academic research on which to found its work and no former projects, from which it could draw lessons. That was not the case of projects in other countries (for example Mexico, Peru, Ecuador), where linguistic and cultural problems have been under analysis and action for many years by research workers and study centres; the latter have frequently contributed to implementing and following up activities in the field of bilingual education or have collaborated in such projects undertaken by international cooperation. In Nicargua, on the contrary, there is no such tradition: there are very few specialists in linguistic, sociolinguistic and anthropological research. Nicaragua's higher education institutions apparently do not include linguistics or anthropology in their curricula; the national education system –especially before 1979–

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was set up on the basis of a supposed linguistic homogeneity and cultural unity of the population– achieved, or about to be achieved, through imposing the official language and uniform programmes, which were not adapted to local contexts. Moreover, most of the available personnel capable of providing bilingual education has been trained inside the PEBI itself.

Although the situation has gradually improved and will continue to do so in the future –thanks particularly to the efforts of the technical team in charge, to the numerous initiatives taken by CIDCA and to external support already received, or under study– it is easy to understand the origin of many of the difficulties, shortcomings and technical limitations of the Programme.

Apart from having had to develop an innovative approach in a context of insufficient technical and material resources, the PEBI programme was not able to learn from other formal education experiences on the Atlantic Coast. Except for the brief and relatively successful parenthesis of Language Literacy (ALFALEN), which was carried out between October 1980 and February 1981, not without meeting resistance –we have to go back as far as 1955 to find an experiment which introduced the Miskito language into formal education. However, this project, "Pilot Project of Basic Education in Rio Coco" carried out between 1955 and 1960 with technical assistance from Unesco, and which in 1957 covered 70 communities in the Rio Coco Valley (Miñano García, 1960: 60), is more a historic oddity than a useful reference.

The project, in effect, reflects the typical assimilation attitude of the time, the basic idea of which was to integrate the Indians into civilization and –through a vast campaign of Spanish teaching– allow them to share the benefits of national integration and development. At the beginning, the project "decided to use the native language as a step towards learning the official language", possibly as a result of the recommendations made in 1951 by Unesco, according to which vernacular languages were the best teaching method at the primary education level, since "the individual learns more easily and better in his own language, and learning to read and write in Miskito language would allow preservation of the cultural and social values of that language" (ibid., p. 51).

This transition model may not satisfy us, but it did represent a considerable step forward at the time; however, the idea did not have much success "since no resources were available at the outset to prepare and print booklets, texts and other teaching materials of sufficient quality to be used for Spanish teaching and literacy. With the urgent need to undertake something to integrate the Miskito Indian into the new cultural, social and economic life (...), it was recommended that both schools and adult centres would teach Spanish according to the natural or direct method, so as to take advantage of the interest of the natives eager to be able to use the official language of the country" (ibid., p. 108).

We ignore the characteristics and degree of success of this natural method, since "the majority of the inhabitants did not understand Spanish, and the educators did not understand Miskito" (ibid., p. 79). According to the author of the report, the illiteracy rate of the population involved in the project –which was 88,5% in 1955– had decreased to 42,5% in 1960 (ibid., p. 139); a calculation of available figures gives us a total of 1600 new literates after five years of work.

This project can obviously not be considered an antecedent for the PEBI; but some of the anecdotes surrounding its execution may be of more interest, as for example the Willys truck sent by Unesco which, in 1957, was the first motor vehicle to enter Bismona, or the visit in October 1955 by the Director General of Unesco at the time, the American Luther H. Evans, a rather unusual event which must have caused a great deal of expectations and impression in the zone.

Internal and external difficulties

The second specific feature of the PEBI is that it is immerged in a process of deep-going social, economic and political change in the country, which started in July 1979. As in all other cases of a determined change of structures, Nicaragua has had to face numerous internal difficulties arising from a history of domination and dependence. But Nicaragua has also had to resist external pressure, taking all possible forms, to put obstacles in its way, weaken it, divert it or neutralize it –efforts which, as we all know, have had high social and economic costs for the country.

In this context, the linguistic and cultural issue of the Atlantic Coast almost immediately acquired highly conflictive connotations, in which intervened both manipulations by interested parties, errors in judgement and interpretation and ideological narrowmindedness. We can mention here that while the eyes of the world at one point were on the "valiant Miskito fighters", nobody worried about the fate of the "leftist fighters" in Guatemala, also Indians, who were swept away together with civilians by one of the most ferocious and bloody military dictatorships of

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contemporary Central American history (under General Lucas García).

It goes without saying that the progressive attempts to find a viable solution to the problem of the Atlantic Coast would not have been possible without the social transformation process in which the country is immersed, and to which the PEBI itself owes its existence.

It equally goes without saying that the road has not been easy, nor without contradictions, difficulties and incomprehension at the institutional level. A quick reading of the different legal decisions –as for example Decree No 571 from 1980, which authorizes the teaching in Miskito and English up to the fourth primary grade and thus provides the legal ground for the PEBI, of the Declaration of Principles of 1981, of the 1987 Constitution and the 1987 Statutes of Autonomy (Law No 28) –reveals how twisted the road has been before leading to the decidedly original proposal of autonomy.

It is not the aim of this study to go into a detailed analysis of the important bibliography existing on the topic, but it is worth mentioning that proposals to establish autonomy are more the exception than the rule in the region. Except for the rather anomalous case of the Comarca Indians in Panama, Latin American governments have generally not gone beyond sterile statements on the multilingual and pluricultural character of their country, and only with extreme caution have they accepted to implement bilingual and intercultural education projects; only during this decade, have they begun to institutionalize them (in Mexico, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador). And they still have a long way to go to really want to carry out projects, which in fact concern the native population's right to self-determination, self-management or autonomy.

Undoubtedly, problems and resistance have had to be overcome to make institutions receptive to bilingual education; this has generally been the case in other countries in the region, also in those where the linguistic and cultural issue concerns large proportions of the population. In countries where more than 20 languages are spoken, for example, or where more than half of the population consider themselves Indians, it has not been easy either to convince authorities and education specialists of the need to experiment and adopt new teaching approaches so as to include languages and contents, which form part of the cultural environment of the education subjects.

In Nicaragua, several years went by before Decree No 571 was actually carried into concrete action, that is before PEBI was started. We would probably have to look into the context, in which the 1980 decree was adopted, in order to be able to judge some of its initial shortcomings and limitations, such as, for example, having implicitly advocated a transition model, or not having considered the Sumo population. With all its defects, however, it does constitute a considerable breakthrough as compared with before; seen in the Central American context, it constitutes one of the first legal measures to open up the education system to languages not recognized as official (in this case, Miskito and Creole English).

However, the way the problem was set out and the model used in Decree No 571 do not coincide with the contents of the 1987 Constitution (in particular, articles 11, 90, 91, 121 and 180) and of the Statutes of Autonomy elaborated the same year (mainly articles 5, 8, point 5, and 11, points 2 and 5), and it would be convenient to revise it as soon as possible.

Basic Principles

The context of social transformation which forms the basis of the Programme has contributed to define the basic principles of the chosen model. From the initial outlining and formulation of the Programme, four fundamental principles were established:

- it is *bilingual* "in virtue of the fact that one of the basic pillars of the model is the child's mother tongue; building on that, and with progressive mastery thereof, the child can little by little be integrated into the National Programme (MED, 1989c:6);
- it is *intercultural* "because the model retrieves, develops and strengthens each ethnic culture" (ibid., p. 7) and, at the same time, helps to acquire elements of national and universal culture;
- it is a *model of participation* "since researchers, the authors of the model, specialists and teachers are ethnic members" (ibid.); and
- it is *popular* "because it perceives the education subjects as the centre of action" (ibid).

Furthermore, and in addition to what was stipulated in Decree No 571, the PEBI is developing a maintenance model, recognizing "the need not only to retrieve and respect vernacular cultures, but also to help to develop them (ibid., p. 8).

In accordance with these principles, PEBI's general objectives in the basic stage (first to fourth grade) include aspects related to the language and culture of the pupils. From a linguistic point of view, it is stipulated

that the children shall acquire abilities and skills, which will allow them to master reading-writing, both in their mother tongue (Miskito, Sumo or Creole English) and in Spanish; moreover, use of the mother tongue as a communication means is stimulated and the ethnic identity thus valorized. As regards culture, retrieval and valorizing of cultural traditions are promoted among the pupils, as well as organization forms and development mechanisms, in order to strengthen their own identity in the context of national life (ibid., pp. 3-6). The other objectives follow the lines of the general national education system, the "Aims, Objectives and Principles of the New Education System" (1983) and the education policy which, since 1979, has succeeded in extending, improving and transforming educational provision.

After a brief phase of experimentation started in March 1983 in the Sumubila settlement with Miskito-Spanish teaching (Norwood and Zeledón, 1985), PEBI started activities in 1984 with 215 pupils and 7 Miskito teachers in Sumubila, Lamlaya and Puerto Cabezas, extending action to Sumo and English in the course of the same year (MED, 1988a:2). The Programme has continued to expand regularly and, already in 1987, almost 30% of regional school enrolment was incorporated in PEBI (7.925 pupils, out of a regional total of 26.321) (MED, 1987).

In 1988, the Programme covered 9.870 children (initial enrolment) with 340 teachers, from preprimary through the fourth primary grade, divided up as follows: in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN): 6.140 children and 188 teachers with teaching in Miskito and Spanish and 399 children and 22 teachers teaching Sumo and Spanish; in the Southern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS): 2.866 children and 113 teachers with English and Spanish, and 465 children and 17 teachers with Miskito and Spanish teaching (MED, 1989a:5). During our visit to Rosita, we noted that, due to "compressing" and chronical lack of support, resources and trained personnel, only 262 children, with 14 teachers, were being taught in Sumo-Spanish, at the first two grades; this represents a significant regression from former coverage.

In this respect, it can be said that the Programme has had to function and develop simultaneously: curriculum adaptation, production of materials, training of personnel, extension of coverage and of grades - all this has had to be catered for while the programme was in operation, resulting in obvious problems as regards planning of activities and internal coherence.

On the other hand, and due to the dynamics inherent in this kind of functioning, which is difficult to stop and control once it is in move, and which requires almost full-time exclusive attention on the part of the technical teams in charge - activities in the field of experimentation, validation, research and follow-up action have been reduced to a minimum, if at all, partly also because of the armed conflict in the Atlantic Coast region, which has prevented the Programme from developing normally.

With regard to structure and functioning, the PEBI today relies on a technical team in the Ministry of Education in Managua (6 members), a regional team for the Miskito-Spanish section in Puerto Cabezas (11 technicians), a technical team for the English-Spanish section in Bluefields (9 technicians) and, finally, a zone team for the Sumo-Spanish section in Rosita (4 technicians). Up to the end of 1988, the Programme functioned as a department attached to the General Basic Education Direction (both at the central and regional levels). Due to difficulties encountered, and in order to ensure more direct attendance to the Programme's particularities, from February 1989 onwards the PEBI comes directly under the Ministry of Education (Vice-Minister at the central level, and Regional Delegates in each of the Southern and Northern Atlantic Coast regions) with relative autonomous management and planning; the future will show if this solution is functional or not.

As regards region and zone structures, "all aspects of educational knowledge are represented in the technical teams: linguistic and socio-anthropological research, curriculum planning, elaboration of educational and teaching materials, school supervision and evaluation, teacher training, etc." (MED, 1989c:8). The central technical team is in charge of "general coordination of the Programme, supervision and evaluation of educational activities, relations between the different organs and Ministry of Education departments, methodological and tactical support of the technical teams and inter-institution relations in the country" (ibid.). According to various opinions expressed, up to 1988 the technical team basically played a role of establishing norms and of control, partly due to financial and technical limitations, but also due to the fact that no member of the team spoke the languages involved in the Programme, and because communication and travelling were difficult. Apparently the situation has improved recently: the technical assistance aspect has been reinforced, the team has spent more time in the regions, Miskito, Sumo and Creole English speakers have been integrated in the team, and more attention is paid to tactical and methodological support.

Educational level of the teaching staff

Information dating from 1987 concerning the academic level of the teachers indicates that out of the 311 teachers in the Programme, 12 had completed the fourth primary grade, 152 the sixth, 97 the ninth, and only 50 had graduated from secondary school (or equivalent) (MED, 1989a:4). The teachers of the Sumo-Spanish section were found to have the lowest education level (of 21 teachers, 7 had completed the fourth primary grade and the rest the sixth). However, the percentage of "empiricism" in the Programme - more than 50% - is equivalent to the one found at the national level. (MED/General Planning Direction, 1989:8).

A sizeable effort was undertaken between 1984 and 1987 to train the teaching staff, with 45 training courses covering a total of 231 work-days for 1.026 participants (MED, 1987). Training periods have generally been brief, and follow-up has been insufficient.

Training has mainly covered the following areas: bilingual and bicultural education, linguistics, evaluation research, curriculum planning, methodology of preprimary education, use and command of educational materials, Spanish as a second language and structure of the mother tongue (MED, 1987). In this field, the PEBI has received considerable external support from the group "Linguists for Nicaragua" (LFN) - who organized two workshops on linguistics and education in January 1986 and January 1987 for technical staff and teachers - and from the "Bilingual Education Support Project" (NICA-BESP), whose help made it possible to organize two workshops in August 1986 and August 1987 on teaching methods for the English-Spanish teachers in the Programme (Honda et al., 1987:6).

Only recently has the Programme begun to study the urgent need to set up proper training organs and programmes, in order to train the bilingual education teachers. The PEBI is not an isolated case here; most of the bilingual intercultural education programmes and projects in the region have trained their teachers on the job, and little attention has been paid to training in teacher training institutes or schools (relevant experiences have however taken place in this respect in the Andes region, in particular in Puno, Peru, and in the Shuar Bilingual Intercultural Teacher Training Institute in Bomboiza, Ecuador). However, with progressive institutionalization of bilingual and intercultural education, authorities, technicians and specialists are beginning to focus on the problem of training of human resources (here again, the most significant attempts are to be found in the Andean region).

In Nicaragua, training of the future teacher has followed a pattern very much like the Ecuadorian one: access to teacher training institutes is open to those who have completed the sixth grade of General Basic Education; after three years' training, they can start exercising as basic school teachers (first to fourth grades). With two additional years' study (in Ecuador, this is called "post-bachillerato"), they obtain the title of Primary Education teachers. Incidentally, this pattern is now being revised, as it was realized that the duration of studies was insufficient and too crammed, and that the graduates' level left much to desire.

Back in 1986 already, work had started (fact-finding research) to establish the ideal profile of a bilingual education teacher, but could not be completed due to lack of technical and financial resources. In 1988, amendments were made in the training programme of the Bluefields Teacher Training Institute (13 teacher trainers and about 100 students), and it is hoped to carry out similar work in the Teacher Training School of Puerto Cabezas (14 teachers and 116 students). The amendments in question concern the following subjects: mother tongue, history and culture of the Atlantic Coast, methodology of mother tongue teaching, methodology of Spanish as a second language. This year, the organization 'Xarxa Internacional Catalana' is expected to provide technical and financial assistance to the Teacher Training School in Puerto Cabezas; thus, it will hopefully be able to resume the work started in 1986.

The PEBI teaching plan for the elementary stage (first to fourth grade) comprises the following subjects: mother tongue (reading-writing, reading and language), Spanish (oral, reading-writing, reading and language), mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, physical education and vocational guidance (MED, s.f.:7). Some modifications were recently made to the plan: fine arts and musical education were eliminated, and and it was decided to integrate natural and social sciences along with the language subject from the third grade onwards.

Two factors are taken into account when preparing the teaching plan for a subject: the culture and the language of the pupils. As regards the cultural aspect, "the contents of education should be drawn from the 'cosmovision' of the pupil and his social group. Elements of his everyday life should form the groundwork for a future systematization. Successively, as the child develops, the horizon should be broadened to encompass the nation and the universe" (ibid., p. 4). As to the linguistic aspect, "the educational process

should start out from the mother tongue (...). The official language should progressively be introduced as a second language, using the familiar structural pattern of the mother tongue to help. In the method, the mother tongue should not be used as a simple transition towards the official language, but should be maintained all through school as a way of reappraising ethnic culture" (ibid.).

In accordance with these principles, Spanish is introduced orally from the first grade in the Miskito-Spanish and Sumo-Spanish sections, and teaching of reading-writing of the mother tongue develops over two semesters using the phonic, analytic-synthetic method (FAS). Reading-writting in Spanish starts in the second grade and continues systematically through third grade (six hours weekly, like in the fourth grade). Mother tongue reading and language continue to be reinforced through eight hours weekly in the second grade and four hours in the third and fourth respectively.

Mathematics are considered a bilingual subject in the first two grades and continue in Spanish as from the third. Physical education is treated as a bilingual subject all through the four grades. Before the teaching plan was modified, natural and social sciences were taught in the mother tongue in third grade, and in Spanish only from the fourth grade. The overall incidence of Spanish in the Plan varies from 21,7% in the first grade to 64% in the fourth grade (ibid., p. 8); this is not quite in line with the maintenance pattern advocated by PEBI, since the curriculum trend again appears to be the transition towards a national and universal culture, with a progressive reduction in the use of the mother tongue. Moreover, the integration of 'language' as a subject and of natural and social sciences may give rise to problems; in effect, it creates a complex superposition of the languages as teaching *subjects* and as teaching *vehicles;* this may not be easy to handle for teachers with the level of knowledge they have.

As regards the English Spanish bilingual pattern, Spanish is started orally in the second grade, and teaching of reading-writing is introduced in the third grade (ibid., p. 12). As we know, it was decided to adopt international English, despite the fact that both children and even teachers generally speak a dialect of English known as Creole English, or Nicaraguan English (Shopen, 1987). Hence, this section of the Programme is even more complex, with two languages and a dialect of one of them, and probable confusion between Creole English and international English. It is particularly difficult to introduce a Creole language into the education system, both because of its low social prestige, and because of the efforts Creole speakers make to learn the standard version. But there are positive experiences in this field, as for example Papiamentu in Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao, which was adopted as a teaching language and which is now being standardized. (Appel and Muysken, 1987:185).

A different method was chosen in Jamaica, where the basic trend has been to use Creole only orally and to elaborate methods and materials to facilitate the learning of standard English (Craig, D., 1988). As far back as the beginning of the sixties, Jamaica considered that the standard English spoken could not be taught with the techniques used for native speakers, or for speakers of other languages, since its lexical resemblance with Creole created a situation of double dialect (ibid., p. 207). That is why the texts elaborated for the first three grades of primary education (*Primary Language Arts,* Kingston, 1978) include "free" dialogues in Creole on selected themes and "controlled" dialogues in standard English taught as a second dialect and in such a way as to reinforce it through reading and writing (ibid., pp. 306-309).

Curriculum adaptation

Curriculum adaptation and elaboration of teaching materials has basically been the task of the regional teams, with methodological orientation, analysis and revision of the outcome by the central team. Teachers have also been involved in this task by revising the materials elaborated during brief day training sessions (two days training every two months) (MED, 1989c:13). The materials for language and mathematics generally consist of a textbook and a notebook for the pupil and methodological guidance in each respective programme for the teacher.

Curricula and materials are elaborated on the basis of national curricula and programmes. To elaborate them, the technical teams have three options: "a) if the national programmes are suitable for the region, the only and most adequate procedure is to translate them. Nothing else needs to be done, since this will guarantee coherence and unity between national and regional objectives; b) if the national programmes are only partly suited for the region, some adapting will have to be done according to the regional needs identified; c) if the national programmes are not suited for the region, a new and different programme has to be worked out which would keep the national objectives in mind" (MED, 1988b:19).

According to different opinions expressed, about 80% of the PEBI texts have been

translated; this places the vernacular language in a subordinate condition, as a mere channel to transmit contents from another language and culture (i.e. the official and national). This conception is rather unusual in bilingual education projects in the region (only Guatemala apparently adopts the same approach). Generally, the socio-linguistic principle of separation of the different language functions in adopted, i.e. each language expresses elements of its own culture. This does not exclude the possibility of developing a language in an environment where it is not spoken; on the contrary, that would help to modify the existing language hierarchy (the official language being used in all spheres, and the vernacular language being restricted little by little to a family and community environment, where it has no possibility of developing). Hence, what really matters is to do away with translations and draw more on the proper resources of a language and on the creativity of its speakers (not to translate, but to produce). We often hear people say that indigenous languages "are no good" for certain subjects (science, technology, etc.); it is interesting to note here that a rather similar attitude towards Spanish can be found among English speakers in the southern part of the United States; this proves that the problem is not inherent in the language, but rather in the subordinate condition of the social groups who speak it.

In spite of numerous difficulties in elaboration, printing and distribution, the Programme has succeeded in elaborating a valuable set of teaching materials for the different subjects from preprimary up to the fourth grade in the Miskito-Spanish section (MED, 1989c13-17). This considerable effort has required a great deal of time and work from the technical teams. We did not make a detailed analysis of the texts, but it is more interesting to see how they are used; that, however, is not covered by this study.

Except for the materials for language and mathematics for the first and second grades in Miskito-Spanish, texts are generally mimeographed, the quality of the printing is rather bad and unattractive. The financial limitations of the Programme are obvious here. In regard to alphabets and spelling for Miskito and Sumo, there are apparently no problems.

As regards the reading texts in Miskito for first and second grades, we observed the absence, at the end of each teaching unit, of summary tables, exercises, games, recapitulations, suggested activities, basic vocabulary, etc., which have all proved to be of great use in other bilingual education experiences. One gets the impression, maybe wrongly, that more stress has been put on teaching *in* the mother tongue (language as a means of study) to the detriment of the teaching *of* the mother tongue (language as the subject of study), and that would not be in agreement with a maintenance pattern.

There is also an evident lack of materials to support the teaching process, both for the children and for the teachers (MED, 1987), due to the context of "surviving education" of the country (MED/General Planning Direction, 1989:14). Finally, we should mention that insufficient time has been devoted to testing and validation of materials (MED, 1987), partly for technical and financial reasons, but also because of the characteristic dynamics of the Programme, which functions and develops at the same time.

In regard to school achievement, only global and preliminary appreciations are available (MED, 1987); they generally show a high rate of achievement compared to the promotion percentage (around 80%) and low repetition and dropout rates. It should be recalled here that promotion is automatic between the first and second grades, and that for promotion to the third grade, about 60% of the final marks are achieved through brief tests carried out all through school year.

On the other hand, preliminary reports on the English-Spanish section contain much less optimistic appreciations (Honda et al., 1987). There appears to be a serious problem of collecting, treating and interpreting statistical data, and not only inside the PEBI (MED/General Planning Direction, 1989:26). This weakness can considerably affect planning of the Programme's activities; from the outset, it prevents obtaining exact figures on enrolment trends, identifying problems and difficulties in time and planning corrective and reinforcement measures. It should be recalled that it is often difficult to establish how, and to which degree, a bilingual education programme contributes to lower repetition or dropout rates, due to the variety of factors involved, some of them having nothing to do with the education system. On the other hand, the evaluations of linguistic abilities (receptive and productive, oral and written) acquired by the children in the two languages would be particularly interesting to control how much they assimilate of school programmes, to determine the degree of bilingualism upon entering and upon leaving school, and to establish comparisons with selected schools, which do not provide bilingual education. Until such evaluations are obtained, or at least some verifiable results in pupil achievement, it will continue to be difficult to determine PEBI's real efficiency. It is a fact that such evaluations require an amount of technical and financial resources rarely at the disposal of bilingual intercultural

experiences in the region (the only known evaluation of this type was carried out in 1988 in the framework of the Puno Project in Peru, after it had functioned for ten years).

The most serious shortcomings and deficiencies are observed in the fields of supervision, publicizing and research. Supervision is said to be "one of the weakest points of the Programme (...), in spite of the fact that the supervising function was purposely developed to provide teachers with technical support, and there is a persisting tendency to control, inspect and at times even pry (...)" (MED, 1987). This is preoccupying, since schoolroom follow-up and teacher guidance should be strong points in a bilingual education programme, not the weakest; the teacher who has to work with methods, which are new to him, needs constant support, and people with whom he can clarify doubts and uncertainties; he needs motivation and guidance to help him overcome his insecurity. Lack of such technical help, added to the teacher's insufficient training and low level of academic knowledge "causes a great deal of damage in programme development, and the outcome is a teaching-learning process with many deficiencies" (MED, 1983c:3).

As regards work to make the Programme known, it "has been weak and irregular" (MED, 1987) in spite of efforts made. Information has been published through communication media and bulletins, and some 120 meetings held at community level between 1984 an 1987, with some 4.328 people attending (ibid.). However, "some 50% of the Miskito and Sumo population were sufficiently informed of PEBI's importance and activities; (...) The majority of the Creole community indicate that they do not know what bilingual education is all about, and what it can achieve. Generally speaking, many members of the different communities state that they know little about the Programme, and vague information circulates, due to lack of publicity, ignorance of the importance and essence of the Programme, and lack of fluid communication between the teachers and the communities" (ibid.).

The importance of information and publicity around a bilingual education programme should not be neglected, as can be seen from the different experiences carried out in Latin America. There are many prejudices and deeply rooted misunderstandings as regards bilingual education (a typical case is the father who does not want his son to be taught his mother tongue "because he already knows it", something that a Spanish speaker would never say about his child); if the purpose is building a new nation - multiethnical, pluricultural and multilingual - as suggested by Law No 28, then the populations involved, the education authorities and technicians, and society in general must have clear, simple, regular and up-to-date information about bilingual education, its principles and philosophy, its achievements and results. Such information should be provided all through a bilingual education programme as a regular line of work, and not just in a casual and unplanned manner at the beginning of the programme.

Errors and shortcomings

The PEBI itself has practically not covered the field of research. However, the CIDCA and the LFN and NICA-BESP groups have carried out positive work. The linguistic studies they have published (Avilés and Hale, 1989; CIDCA, 1985b, 1986 and 1987; Craig, 1987; Hale and Lacayo, 1988; Norwood, 1987a; O'Neil and Honda, 1987) and the supporting texts (CIDCA, 1985a and 1989) constitute a valuable contribution towards better knowledge of the languages covered by the Programme.

There is obviously a lot left to be done, and the lack of national specialists (and of financial resources) is indeed a limiting factor, as already underlined. To mention only some of the vacuums, work has not been carried out to establish a socio-linguistic profile of the Atlantic Coast (number of speakers, kinds and degrees of bilingualism, attitudes towards each language and towards bilingual education, regional variations of Spanish, linguistic interferences, scope of utilization of each language, etc.), and available data are based on estimates made in 1982 (Hale and Gordon, 1987). These aspects are important and should be studied in view of planning Programme activities properly and of identifying priority areas (for example, no figures are available on the percentage of the population not covered so far by the Programme, and who would therefore require bilingual teaching).

Some socio-linguistic exploring has been carried out in the Coast area. For example, in October-November 1955, William Reyburn carried out a study for the American Bible Society consisting of 2000 interviews in Bluefields, Puerto Cabezas, Bonanza, Waspán, Asang, San Carlos and other Rio Coco communities "in order to determine more detailed requirements for a translation of the Bible in areas where different languages compete" (Reyburn, 1975:87). Unfortunately, and not considering the more religious objective, this study was never published entirely. The data presented by the author (ibid., pp. 110-112) do not give any indication of sample techniques, and they only refer to

bilingualism in Bluefields and Puerto Cabezas. Moreover, it appears from the study that mainly literates were considered: in Bluefields, for example, 91,5% of interviewed Spanish speakers declared that they read and wrote their language; the same is the case for 95,4% of the Creole English speakers and 45,4% of the Miskitos. In Puerto Cabezas, the respective percentages were 94,7, 87,4 and 55,6.

In spite of the above, and other limitations, the data do give an idea of the high incidence of bilingualism (and trilingualism) in the Coast area at the time: in Bluefields, about 70% of the interviewed Spanish speakers admitted knowing some English, and some 83% of the Creoles said that hey knew some Spanish. In Puerto Cabezas, the respective percentages were approximately 63 and 65%; moreover, close to 38% of the Spanish speakers, and around 50% of the Creoles declared that they had some knowledge of the Miskito language (among the Miskitos, some 63% declared some knowledge of English and 58% of Spanish).

Some thirty years later, CIDCA carried out 450 interviews in the Puerto Cabezas urban centre to define the population's linguistic attitudes towards the languages spoken in the region, and especially towards the problems of officialization (Norwood, 1985). The study had limited scope and was not very representative, since it could not be carried out in Bluefields, Rosita, Bonanza, Siuna and other Miskito and Sumo communities in the North, as had originally been planned, and moreover suffered from some "lack of precision in the formulation of the questions" (ibid., p. 4). The above brief annotations go a long way to show how much is left undone to obtain a clearer picture of the socio-linguistic problem in the Atlantic Coast region.

Nothing is known either about the patterns of mother tongue acquisition (Miskito, Sumo and Creole English), or about how many languages school children know (how many monolinguals, bilinguals, trilinguals, what kind of bilinguals?). The study of Ulwa, a dialect of Sumo, and of Creole English is only starting, and there are no systematic studies of cultural features to facilitate their retrieval and valorization.

Logically, it is not PEBI's responsibility to take on all this research work, nor should the Ministry of Education become a research centre. Teacher do not need to be linguists and anthropologists, just good teachers who are familiar with the methodology of language teaching and know a little about linguistics and anthropology. CIDCA, on the other hand, might play an important role in support of the Programme by intensifying the kind of work it has undertaken so far and providing the necessary research tools.

Finally, it should be emphasized that important work has been done in the framework of the PEBI to reflect upon, evaluate and critically examine its own work for the period 1984-1987. The results thereof clearly showed the major difficulties which the Programme faces: "lack of training, insufficient allocation of materials, unskilled teachers, deficient supervision and follow-up" (MED, 1987). Priority areas were defined for training, such as methodology of language teaching, curriculum planning and transformation, techniques to elaborate materials, capacity to handle programmes and methodological guidance (MED, 1987). A number of suggestions were made to improve PEBI execution, some of which have been implemented and others, which can only become reality in the framework of a systematic technical and financial support.

In the general description of the Programme presented earlier, a series of observations and appreciations were made concerning specific aspects of its implementation, as seen against the characteristics and results of similar projects in Latin America. Such projects in other countries were taken as a reference more than a model for a bilingual education programme satisfying all the technical, tactical and financial requirements. An ideal model does not exist in the region, although we would like to think that we are getting closer to it.

Bilingual intercultural education is a profoundly innovative approach towards changing political conceptions of how national unity can be reached and of the role of the education system; hence, it comes up against all kinds of difficulties wherever it is applied. It is a suitable area for experimentation, but here again problems and uncertainties exist, in spite of accumulated knowledge and results.

Seen from that perspective, the "Bilingual Intercultural Education Programme" in Nicaragua lays bare both problems, shortcomings and limitations, which it shares with all similar projects in the region. It moreover possesses a drive of its own related with the specific context of the country, in which we cannot underestimate the effects of the armed conflict in the Coast region. It may be useful to summarize these problems and to suggest some solutions.

Training, methodologies, follow-up

The responsible teams have generally devoted most time to elaboration of teaching materials and to curriculum adaptation. Sufficient attention may not have been given

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to the following: teacher training, introducing and adjusting innovative methods, experimentation, testing and validation of materials, the essential follow-up and guidance at the school level, the indispensable dissemination and information work at all levels, and finally to research and systematization. All these aspects have obvious bearing on a bilingual education experience, its success or failure, as has been observed in many Latin American countries. When we say success, we do not mean miracles, but only succeeding in obtaining results which are equal, or superior to those of traditional education, but never inferior. That is why teaching materials must not be of lesser quality, the teaching process must not be more deficient, and teachers not less qualified or less devoted. Faced with such problems, education users generally do not think of the technical difficulties involved, but attribute shortcomings to the model itself and to its conception; this may make them reject the model - a feeling which may not be easy to overcome later.

Many of the Programme's difficulties –particularly in terms of planning– probably spring from its very nature and from the fact that it has to function while in motion. That also has advantages, such as being able to satisfy demand as it grows, to link experimentation and action and operate at different levels at the same time, making adjustments when needed.

But it also has several disadvantages. Growth may be too disorderly and technically and methodologically uncontrollable to ensure the best quality. Curriculum adaptation on a yearly basis may lose sight of elements which guarantee its internal homogeneity and coherence. In times of scarce technical and financial resources, a too rapid expansion results in recruitment of unexperienced and unqualified personnel.

In these circumstances, the question may be if it is better to provide 5 or 6 grades of bilingual education with many shortcomings and limitations or, on the contrary, give priority to consolidating and improving the first four grades to ensure an acceptable quality level, at least for that elementary stage. The latter solution does not exclude extending coverage later to include the sixth grade and would have the advantage, moreover, of doing so with a solid experience.

As mentioned earlier, PEBI's language teaching is, to a great extent, based on translations. There seems to be a lot of concern as to the danger of moving away from national programmes; this is understandable: an education system can accept differences, but it also has to guarantee uniformity of results, particularly as regards access to basic and elementary knowledge. But the proportion of translations by far exceeds what is produced in the languages themselves, and the "intercultural" perspective thus loses a great deal of its original significance.

During the seventies, bilingual education projects - still very few - in Latin America began to call themselves bicultural as wel, in an endeavour to oppose the use of indigenous languages as mere channels to transmit contents unrelated with their cultures, and to encourage recognition of the intimate relationship between language and culture in the teaching process.

During this decade, most of the bilingual education programmes and projects in the region claim to be intercultural as well (Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile) on the assumption that an individual can handle a number of cultural features and several languages, but that his reference culture remains only one, which can expand and broaden when he acquires other knowledge and experiences. Building a new nation, united in its diversity, is not incumbent on some sectors of the population only (natives, linguistic minorities) but on all of society, and education has a relevant role to play to encourage exchange, dialogue and mutuous respect among the different cultures. Obviously, what is important is what is done in practice and not definitions and words. For example, from 1980 and up to now, the bilingual intercultural teacher training institutes in Ecuador are bilingual and intercultural only by name.

The methodology of language teaching has to be one of the strong points in a bilingual education programme, and it is a field which can produce results and innovations, that can be useful for the whole education system. It is well-known that many traditional approaches and obsolete methods in Spanish teaching are still in use, disregarding all the progress made over the last twenty years in the field of linguistics applied to education.

Teachers trained in some of the more successful bilingual education projects have obtained very good results with Spanish speaking children applying the methods they learned. In other ocases, children of Indian mother tongue have been observed to speak relatively better Spanish than children of Spanish mother tongue, who had not attended bilingual education schools.

A programme like the PEBI can contribute a great deal to introducing new approaches, techniques and methods into language teaching, not only for the population it covers, but also in formulating proposals and applying new techniques which may be pertinent at a larger scale. This aspect is therefore of crucial importance and should be preserved.

The fact that teacher training curricula and a bilingual education teacher profile have come under study is an important step to plan ahead the Programme's action in the medium and long term. Experience in Latin America shows that the main problem is not so much in elaborating the teaching plans for teacher training, nor defining the teacher profile, but rather taking the necessary action to provide further, or in-service training of teachers who work with the new contents, and also in elaboration of reference materials. An example in case is Ecuador, where relatively advanced teaching plans were elaborated in 1984 for the Bilingual Intercultural Teacher Training Institutes, but could not be used, because there were no qualified teacher trainers and no supporting materials.

As regards the profile, and leaving aside the general and specific professional aspects, it is important to clearly define the elements related with linguistics and culture. We could for example take the model made out on the basis of experience acquired in the Puno Superior Pedagogical Institute, Peru:

a) "to have profound knowledge of the philosophy of bilingual education and of its application in the socio-cultural context of the country;
b) to communicate correctly and efficiently in Spanish and in the other language involved, both orally and in writing;
c) to be familiar with basic linguistic concepts applicable to a bilingual education system;
d) to understand the nature of individual bilingualism and of the process through which a monolingual individual becomes bilingual;
e) to understand the basic effects of contacts between languages and cultures, and their implications on curricula;
f) to be able to identify structural differences between the vernacular language of the pupil and Spanish, and to recognize possible areas of positive interferences and transfers;
g) to know the effects of cultural and socio-economic factors, both on the community and on the overall development of the pupil;
h) to have a positive attitude towards preserving and developing the pupils' language and culture;
i) to stimulate the pupil's desire to preserve and develop his own culture and to reaffirm his identity as a member of a multilingual and pluricultural society;
j) to be familiar with methods, techniques and materials for the teaching of reading-writing in the vernacular language and in Spanish as a second language, and to know the theoretical principles thereof;
k) to be familiar with methods, techniques and materials so as to be able to develop the pupils' ability to understand and express themselves orally and in writing, both in the vernacular language and in Spanish, and to make a simple grammatical analysis in both languages;
l) to be able to dose the use of the vernacular language and of Spanish when teaching the different subjects (...)" (de López, 1989:125-126).

Apart from the Puno experience, mention should again be made of the activities of the Shuar Bilingual Intercultural Teacher Training Institute in Bomboiza, Ecuador, which for several years has been implementing a teacher training plan according to the bilingual education model.

Indispensable support

Finally, it should be recalled that research activities are indispensable to support the development of a bilingual intercultural educational programme. The PEBI has practically had no such support, despite CIDCA's initiatives which are beginning to fill some of the more serious gaps in knowledge of the languages involved in the Programme.

The lack of professional staff and specialists in the country has been mentioned repeatedly; it may take on major proportions with the officialization of Atlantic Coast languages in the framework of the autonomy process, which makes it indispensable to undertake consequent linguistic planning. The lack of training organs at the national level also constitutes a serious vacuum to train specialists and researchers, who can contribute to the bilingual education action, among other tasks.

Over the last years, some progress has been achieved in this field in several countries of the region. For example, in 1985, the Puno Universidad Nacional del Altiplano, Peru, started a post-graduate course in Andean linguistics and education with help from the German Technical Assistance Society (GTZ); or the post-graduate course in ethno-linguistics, which the Bogota Universidad de los Andes, Colombia, started in 1983 with help from the French CNRS; thanks to this course, and during the four years it has existed, studies have begun in 26 languages, research undertaken by graduates of this course has been published, and a group of graduates have set up the Colombian Centre for the Study of Aboriginal Languages (de López, 1989:43).

In the case of Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast, the setting up of a training and research centre in linguistics and anthropology, coordinating activities with the PEBI and the Teacher Training Schools in Puerto Cabezas and Bluefields, would certainly fill some of the existing gaps, both in regard to research and to training of human resources.

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OREALC ACTIVITIES

REGIONAL NETWORK FOR THE TRAINING OF PERSONNEL AND SPECIFIC SUPPORT IN LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMMES –REDALF–

During the last few months of the present year, consolidation and expansion processes on experimental basis by REDALF during 1988-1989, were maintained. Besides, most of the activities were oriented towards the preparation of the International Literacy Year.

Among the main achievements of the period are:

- The incorporation to REDALF of a new country: Argentina. The "National Board of Adult Education" (Dirección Nacional de Educación de Adultos"-DINEA) is the institution appointed to coordinate the national network; with this same purpose OREALC sponsored two seminars to prepare the operation of the network in that country.
- The regional diffusion of REDALF's activities through a mean mainly dedicated to this task; a contract was signed with ICEA (Colombia) in order that the "Contraste" magazine fulfills the above mentioned purpose.
- National literacy programmes were evaluated in various countries, and seminars were organized to analyze the results. This activity, which had the technical and financial assistance from OREALC, ended up in the "Regional Seminar on Policies and Strategies to overcome Illiteracy during the Period 1990-2000" (Managua, Nicaragua, November 23 through December 1) where national reports on the evaluation processes were presented and proposals referred to the field of literacy.
- The follow-up of the regional study on adults' primary education; it is also worthwhile mentioning the carrying out of the Sub-regional Workshop of Antigua, (Guatemala, 2-4 October)-where the final report of Central America, Mexico and Panama was analyzed. This meeting was sponsored by OREALC and organized by CREFAL together with the Ministry of Education of Guatemala.
- The strengthening of the work in the field "Literacy and Woman"; during the month of October took place the Sub-regional Workshop on Civic Education Programmes and Participation of Rural Woman in the Socio-economical life of the Community (Cochabamba, Bolivia, 2-6 October) a joint OREALC/UNICEF-Bolivia activity.
- Training of adults' educators and literacy trainers in various countries of the Region; in some instances, these processes of instruction are related to the examination and starting of new courses of action and programmes.
- Beginning of studies in a scarcely explored thematic area: the functional illiteracy.
- Actions aimed towards taking conscience about illiteracy and literacy, through educational fairs and the communication mass media, mainly through the radio.
- Final evaluation of the UNESCO/AGFUND Project (Perú) on Literacy with audiovisual media.
- Contract with the BIE to prepare a registered bibliography on books in Spanish referring to the subject of literacy.

A breakdown of activities by line and area of action follows:

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
Regional

Regional Seminar on Educational policies and national strategies to overcome illiteracy during the period 1990-2000 (Managua, Nicaragua, November 23 December 1)

This regional seminar, which constitutes the main regional activity introductory to the ILY, fits within the recommendation proceeding from the Intergovernmental Regional Committee during its II Meeting (Bogotá, 1987) regarding giving priority to the evaluation of national literacy programmes. In order to fulfill this requirement, OREALC designed an evaluating programme at a regional level and prepared instruments for data collection (a methodological guidebook and a form to be administered as questionnaire at the institutions).

For the same purpose, OREALC financially sponsored the organization of seminars in some countries, in order to discuss the results of national evaluations. In the same way, it provided technical assistance through institutions (CREFAL) and consultants so as to promote the quality of the evaluative processes.

This group of processes ended up in the preparation of national reports and in the regional seminar of Managua, where the results obtained were discussed. Furthermore, at this meeting, trends of work for the decade were explored, besides the working out of new strategies around the literacy subject.

Most of the countries of the region attended this meeting (Netherlands Antilles, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, St. Vincent and Grenadines) as well as experts invited as personal guests plus the CREFAL and OREALC representatives.

The main subjects of the meeting were –on one hand–, to analyze the structure of literacy programmes (objectives, strategies, methods of administration, methods, means and materials, results) and, on the other hand, place literacy in a wider context (post-literacy and adult primary education, children's literacy and the over-coming of school failure, literacy and social and educational democratization, literacy and cultural factors).

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

National Seminar on Evaluation of the Literacy Plan (Rosario, Argentina)

A National Seminar on the Evaluation of literacy actions in that country, was held in Rosario (20-23 September), organized by the General Board of Adults' Education of Argentina (Dirección General de Educación de Adultos-DINEA).

OREALC provided for technical and financial support, funds to cover tickets and lodging for the attendants plus miscellaneous expenses; and in addition, delivery was made of instruments prepared by OREALC for the evaluation of literacy experiences. Besides, the specialist on adult education of the UNESCO Regional Office attended to the Seminar and gave a lecture on illiteracy and literacy in Latin America and the Caribbean.

During the meeting, which was also sponsored by the OAS, it was settled the incorporation of the DINEA to REDALF.

The Seminar was attended by authorities from the Ministry of Education and Justice and DINEA; Adults Provincial Directors; members from the National Literacy Plan Board; coordinators from said plan; representatives from CTERA and UDA (Teachers' Unions) and from non-governmental organizations.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

Seminar-workshop on evaluation of the literacy experiences (Colombia)

During October, the General Board of Adult Education from the Ministry of Education organized a seminar-workshop in order to systematize the results of the evaluation of national literacy programmes. These conclusions were presented at the Regional Seminar on Policies and Strategies to Overcome Illiteracy during the period 1990-2000 (Managua, Nicaragua-November 23-December 1). This activity counted with the financial support from OREALC.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

Seminar-workshop on evaluation of the national literacy experiences (Nicaragua)

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The General Popular Board of Adult Education from the Ministry of Education of Nicaragua (Dirección General Popular de Educación de Adultos), set up a national seminar to analyze the results of the evaluation of literacy programmes in that country.

The workshop allowed for the preparation of the propositions presented at the Regional Seminar on Policies and Strategies to Overcome Illiteracy (Managua, Nicaragua-November 23-December 1). This activity counted with the financial support from OREALC.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

Seminar-workshop on evaluation of the literacy experiences (Peru)

With the purpose of analyzing the results obtained in the evaluation of the National literacy experiences, a Seminar-workshop took place in Lima, Peru from September 6 through September 8.

The meeting was organized by INIDE; the Ministry of Education of Peru was in charge of selecting the participants.

The workshop allowed for the preparation of the national documents which were presented at the Regional Seminar on National Policies and Strategies to Overcome Illiteracy during the Period 1990-2000 (Managua, Nicaragua-November 23-December 1).

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

Technical assistance to the evaluation of the national literacy experiences (Haiti and Dominican Republic)

During the months of September and October, and with the purpose of providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Education of Haiti and to the Secretariat of Education, Arts and Religion of the Dominican Republic (Secretaria de Educación, Bellas Artes y Culto) in connection with the evaluation processes of the literacy programmes in those countries, a consultant from OREALC collaborated in the use of instruments, preparation of the final report and organization of the National Seminar to discuss the results arising from those national experiences.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

External evaluation of the National Literacy Campaign (Ecuador)

During the months of September through December, a Consultant from OREALC coordinated the external evaluation of the National Literacy Campaign "Monseñor Leonidas Proaño" of Ecuador. Among the activities carried out, it was emphasized the participative determination of the evaluation objectives, on the basis of three-sources of information (literacy teachers, literacy students and authorities). For this purpose, an analysis of working documents and other texts' content of the campaign, was carried out; visits were made to urban and rural literacy circles; interviews to representatives of the campaign. A summary document was prepared on the expectations and purposes people saw, in connection with the above mentioned activity. In this way, a preliminary evaluation document was made out, which emphasized as its main object, the observation of the impact produced by the Campaign, among literacy students and in the community.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Adult Education

Level of activity:
Regional

Technical cooperation (CREFAL)

A technical assistance programme to various countries of the REDALF was carried out by CREFAL during September and October.

In Bogota, Colombia there was a course given on adult education principles (4-8 September) which was designed for professionals dealing with literacy, adult education, health, training and social promotion programmes, and belonging not only to governmental, but also to non-governmental institutions and universities as well.

In San José, Costa Rica, a workshop was prepared on "Education and productive work" designed for officials from the General Board of Adult Education (Dirección General de Educación de Adultos) of that country (4-7 September).

In Lima, Peru, a workshop on "Integral training for trainers-literacy Teachers" was carried out in coordination with the General Board of Adult Education (Dirección

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General de Educación de Adultos) (11-15 September).

In Quito, Ecuador, technical assistance was provided to the National Board of Permanent Popular Education (Dirección Nacional de Educación Popular Permanente) in order to link the results from the Literacy Campaign with those of the Primary Popular Adult Education Programme to be implemented in the future (13-17 November).

Finally, in coordination with CARCAE, technical assistance was offered to the English-speaking Caribbean countries (Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St, Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines) during the workshop "Universities and adult education in the English-speaking Caribbean", which was held in Barbados from October 25 to 27.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Adult education

Level of activity:
Sub-regional

Sub-regional Workshop for the investigation on adult primary education in Central America, Mexico and Panama (Antigua, Guatemala)

From 2 through 4 October, it was held in Antigua, Guatemala, the Subregional Workshop which brought to an end the investigation on primary adult education in the Central America Region, Mexico and Panama. The meeting was organized by CREFAL and the Ministry of Education of Guatemala and counted with the technical and financial support of OREALC. In this event, OREALC was represented by a consultant who explained the general frame of the regional study in which 13 countries are taking part. CREFAL, in turn, coordinated the work in the sub-region and provided training and assistance to the Ministries of Education of the seven countries, that were the executive performers of the study.

This sub-regional division allowed for the national investigation teams to present the conclusions from their corresponding reports, and that the CREFAL team carry out a comparative analysis of the particular circumstances they studied.

Among other matters, it was confirmed the deficient conditions under which this educational method is operating and it was brought up the need to finalize the research process with development actions.

This workshop was attended by the national directors on adult education in the sub-region, authorities from the Ministry of Education of Guatemala and CONALFA (Guatemala), researchers from national teams, the CREFAL Director, a consultant-representing OREALC–, and representatives of the teachers' union of Guatemala.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Adult education

Level of activity:
National

National meeting on guidelines of the Federal Programme on Adult Primary Education (La Rioja, Argentina)

The National Board on Adult Education (Dirección Nacional de Educación de Adultos-DINEA), of Argentina, set up in the city of La Rioja, (8-10 November), a national meeting to discuss the guidelines of the Federal Program on Adult Primary Education. This meeting, sponsored by OREALC and the OAS, was the initial activity for the starting of the literacy national network and the EDA, a REDALF subsidiary. The specialist on adult education from the UNESCO Regional Office attended this meeting and offered a lecture on the subject "Main requirements for a renewed EBA".

The seminar was the first step to organize a federal program of EBA and to restore to the DINEA the coordinating role of this method in the country.

Among the specific objectives of the meeting, were:

- The ellaboration of strategies towards the integration of work, community development, cultural patterns and adult education.
- Reflections on the role of EDA in promoting the community organization.
- To identify impediments and aspects which facilitate the implementation of the above mentioned federal program.

The meeting had a mass aspect (152 people) and all provinces were represented.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Adult education

Level of activity:
National

National meeting concerning an Adult Education National System (Colombia)

The General Board on Adult Education, of the Ministry of Education of Colombia (Dirección General de Educación de Adultos) is coordinating a consultation process in connection with the formation of an adult educa-

tion national system. For this purpose, during the months of October and November, meetings took place at communities, municipalities and departments, as well as a national meeting during the month of December. This activity was financially supported by OREALC.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Adult education

Level of activity:
National

Training Programme for adult instructors (Honduras)

The General Board of Literacy and Adult Education (Dirección General de Alfabetización y Educación de Adultos) of the Ministry of Education of Honduras, set up –during October 23 through 27–, a training plan on adult education. This program was destined for eleven officials from institutions of the national network of Honduras, subsidiary of REDALF, and consisted of an observation tour throughout Costa Rica intended to promote the exchange of experiences between the instructors of adults of the two Central American countries.

The institutions which benefited from the training programme were, besides the Dirección General de Alfabetización y Educación de Adultos-ALFALIT, the Project of Education on Population; the National Agrarian Institute; the Project on Integrated Rural Development (MARGOAS); the National Central of rural workers; the Honduran Association of Coffee Producers; the Honduran Institute of Rural Development; the Cultural Popular Action of Honduras, and the Centre of Studies and Promotion for the Development.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Adult Education

Level of activity:
National

Training event of adult teacher's instructors (Venezuela)

The General Board of Adult Education (Dirección General de Educación de Adultos) of the Ministry of Education of Venezuela prepared five training events for adult teachers's instructors.

The activity was related to the starting of curricular modifications in the adult education methods, in primary, and also in the secondary, diversified and professional education. The program was jointly developed with the Instituto Internacional de Andragogía (INSTIA) and was financially sponsored by OREALC.

Training was aimed not only towards the professional improvement of adult teachers, but besides, it looked for the development of autonomous processes of personnel training at a regional and local level, and at the same time to collaborate in the formation of training centers.

In order to initiate these series of training events, five federal entities were selected (Anzoategui, Aragua, Federal District, Miranda and Yaracuy), and the work was carried out during three days at each place with 20 participants in each one, paying attention to a total number of 100 teachers.

Line of action:
Studies/Research/Evaluations

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
Regional

Regional research on functional illiteracy (Chile)

OREALC established in December a contract with CIDE (Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Educación) in Chile, so that this institution may ellaborate the research project on functional illiteracy. By this contract, it is requested to develop the theoretical background and the task general design, as well as preparing the instruments for data collection. The study will be carried out within the frame of ILY and will also take part in it REDALF member institutions. Functional illiteracy will be studied in five countries of the Region, emphasizing its qualitative dimensions, at the same time that the functional illiteracy will be related with the basic learning needs of young people and adults, particularly, in the fields of the reading-writing process and elementary mathematics.

This effort will also aim at relating functional illiteracy with the social repercussions for the labour world and the civic-political participation.

The project will be analyzed at an experts' meeting that will take place during April 1990 in Santiago, Chile. Based upon the suggestions arising from that workshop, CIDE will prepare the final version of the document.

Line of action:
Studies/Research/Evaluations

Field of action:
Adult Education

Level of activity:
Regional

Regional research on adult primary education

Between the months of September and December, this study continued being developed in the thirteen par-

ticipating countries. In some of them data processing originated by the survey has already begun; in others, the field work is still being carried out. In the case of Central America, Mexico and Panama, CREFAL prepared the sub-regional final report and organized a workshop (Antigua, Guatemala 2-4 October) in order to discuss the results and prepare proposals for EBA. OREALC is at present preparing the codes and charts plans for the regional report; for this purpose, countries have been requested to send in the data disintegrated.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Education and Woman

Level of activity:
Sub-regional

Sub-regional workshop on civic education programmes and participation of the rural woman in the socio-economical and cultural life of the community. (Cochabamba, Bolvia, 2-6 October)

This meeting, jointly organized and sponsored by OREALC and UNICEF-Bolivia, was called together bearing in mind the priority attention given by the Major Project to the educational action of rural women. Also, the meeting was related to the recommendations about the preservation and promotion of the cultural identity and democratization, the participation and cultural dimension of development, arising from the World Conference on Cultural Policies (UNESCO, Mexico 1982).

The purpose of the workshop was to analyze the educational treatment given to the civic education contents in the programmes appointed to rural women; in the same way, it was considered the relationship between formulation processes and the implementation of civic education programmes and the cultural patterns of the rural media.

The meeting was attended by 17 experts of governmental and non-governmental institutions of Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela, plus two officials from Unicef Bolivia and the regional specialist on adult education from OREALC.

Line of action:
Studies/Research/Evaluations

Field of action:
Education and Woman

Level of activity:
Sub-regional

Study on Civic Education and Rural Woman

In the month of October, OREALC signed a contract with a consultant with the purpose of preparing a work on civic education and rural woman, considering as a starting point the documents and materials presented at the Sub-regional Workshop on the subject, carried out in Cochabamba, Bolivia (2-6 October). As far as UNICEF-Bolivia is concerned, they will finance a similar activity, and as a result of both of them, a joint publication will be made.

Line of action:
Information

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

Educational Fair (Choluteca, Honduras)

Within the frame of the preliminary activities of the ILY and of the International Literacy Day, an educational fair took place in Choluteca, Honduras (6-8 September 1989) which was organized by the General Board of Literacy and Adult Education (Dirección General de Alfabetización y Educación de Adultos) of the Ministry of Education of Honduras, sponsored and financed by OREALC.

On the basis of experiences acquired during the fairs held in 1987 and 1988, the present year activity joined together new methods of sensitizing and exchange. It should be noted the participation of teachers from neighbouring countries and the expanded work with institutions of different kinds. Special mention is to be made of: accelerated primary schools for adults; ALFALIT; schools and institutes; teachers colleges; savings and loans cooperatives; small and medium industry associations; women federations and institutions in charge of the woman.

Line of action:
Information

Field of action:
Literacy/Adult Education

Level of activity:
Regional

The "Contraste" magazine

Through a contract between OREALC and the Del Valle Training Institute for Adult Educators, (Instituto de Capacitación para Educadores de Adultos del Valle) (ICEA) of Colombia, it was agreed that the issues of the "Contraste" magazine during 1990 be destined –by this organization–, to spread the REDALF activities.

The idea is to relay upon –for the ILY–, a network counting with its own diffusion media, with regional influence and associated with an institution devoted to the instruction of adult educators.

REGIONAL NETWORK FOR THE TRAINING, INNOVATION AND RESEARCH IN THE FIELDS OF PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION OF BASIC EDUCATION AND LITERACY PROGRAMMES –REPLAD–

Fourth REPLAD Technical Meeting

From 2 through 6 October, 1989, it was held in Quito, Ecuador, the Fourth Technical Meeting of the Regional Network for Training, Innovation and Research in the fields of Planning and Administration of Basic Education and Literacy Programmes, convened by OREALC in its role of Coordinating Secretariat of the Network.

The meeting was attended by 34 participants, from which 23 corresponded to equal number of REPLAD member institutions, 6 had the character of special guests representing specialized organisms in Latin America and Spain, 2 were observers and 3 as OREALC and Unesco Headquarters' specialists.

The meeting was inaugurated with the presence of the Minister of Education of Ecuador and that of the Director of the UNESCO Office in the host country, and it was dedicated to the study of five subjects: a) Analysis of theory and practice in the planning and educational management in Latin America and the Caribbean; b) The decentralization and disconcentration processes of the educational systems in the Region; c) Informatics in the educational management; d) The Attainment and processing of information with respect to the quality of education; and, e) The analysis of the REPLAD development, its projection and Working Plan for the 1990-1991 biennium.

The study of the first subject –Analysis of the theory and practice in the planning and management–, had the contribution of 15 countries whose representatives briefly explained the national experiences included in the corresponding Reports which had been delivered to the participants. The analysis considered as background information the process of institutionalization of educational planning in the countries of the Region, its link with social and economical planning as well as with the State reform. As achievements during the decade of the sixties were mentioned: the expansion of educational opportunities and the progressive development of methods and instruments of diagnosis and programming. It was indicated that during the decade of the seventies, it was observed a loss in the role of planning due to the financial crisis and to the political decisions of a non-democratic character, which was expressed in a loss of coherence, desactivation and the presence of activities separated from the political context, besides an isolation between planners, decision-making persons, those in charge of the financing and of the administrators of the sector.

At the theoretical level, educational planning has been considered not only as an instrument, but as a strategic and dynamic process of support in the decision making as well, whose purposes vary according to the political moment in each country; this allows to see the difference –among others–, of points of view pointed towards either formulating priorities, to change or transform the system, to democratize society or to place in motion the communities' potential. In the same way it was proved the variety of styles which reflect the evaluation of educational planning, which have acquired sectorial, intersectorial, interdisciplinary, interinstitutional, central, regional, normative, situational, technocratics or participative characteristics. The points of view arising from this field belong to the "contingencional" or "strategical" perspectives.

As a trend with a regional scope, it can be considered the importance given to planning as a process of social participation and of agreement between the State and the civil society, either by the transference of responsibilities oriented to basic levels or by favouring the leadership of actors through different levels of participation. Other trends refer to the emphasis on the quality of educational performance, to the intersectoriality of the process, to the incorporation of technological aids and to the technical and political training of human resources assigned to these tasks.

The analysis arising from the discussion on the decentralization of educational system was fructiferous, and following were the aspects which incite agreement between the participants:

- centralism has constituted a phenomenon exis-

ting in both the federal countries and in the unitary countries as well, and it has been faced with crisis due to the fact that it has not been able to adequately respond to the population demands on educational matters. This fact has led to most of the countries of the Region to look for decentralized schemes in the administration of the educational sector;

- the still incipient development of the theoretical formulations and of the decentralization experiences is reflected in the conceptual lack of precision of the terminology, the co-existence of central and decentralized schemes, a certain lack of consideration for the political surrounding and the denaturalization of the efforts diverted to private practices;
- it is observed that decentralization processes, in general, are generated in the interior of the educational sector and through the central levels of same, with only few experiences that indicate the participation of the basis in these decisions. This circumstance has led to the permanence of methodological and conceptual schemes in the planning and administration, characteristics of centralism, in the frame of decentralization experiences;
- the resistance to the decentralizing processes come from both, the burocratic sectors affected as well as from teachers' unions. In the latter case, moved by the fear of union fragmentation, and by the little participation of social sectors in the study and formulation of these policies;
- decentralizing actions are mainly reflected in the field of assistance aspects, in the management at educational center level and in the nomination of personnel. In general, little advance has been made in the decentralization of budgets and it has not been given enough priority to pedagogical matters and to educational practices;
- decentralization must be considered as a means and a strategy to allow for the existance of educational policies within the frame of national policies. In this sense, it is required: to ellaborate new methodologies and planning and administration instruments which may be functional, task in which it is essential the cooperation from the universities; to re-define functions and organization of the central organisms; to put into operation the educational decentralization through wider processes of social organization; to evaluate their results as compared to the objectives of the national policies in which they are placed.

The participants agreed in that the decentralizing processes in practice reflect the diversity of ways to achieve it, and that strategies used are valid as long as they are articulated and in harmony with the political-educational objectives which frame them.

To cover the subject on "Informatics in the educational management", OREALC entrusted the base document to the Centro de Administración Educacional of the Universidad de Concepción, (Chile) and in which the following subjects were included:

- technological innovation and diffusion;
- information, informatics and educational management;
- prototype for a data base on educational management.

Starting from the recognition of social, cultural, economical and political projections which the informatics phenomenon presents, its importance in the administration and in the support to the educational process have been emphasized. However, its non-systematic incorporation has generated out of proportion expectations and problems for its implementation, originated in the lack of clearness in their purposes and to the absence of educomputational policies. It was established that within the frame of educational systems you can make out an integrating level of the information –corresponding to superior administration in which the synthesis data will allow for both, the macro-evaluation as well as for the adoption of strategic decisions–, and one of local support, formed by the educational establishments which constitute the feeding source of the integrating level. In both cases, the educational organizations are faced to the problem of the explosion of data and to its handling which, when not solved, creates frustration and resistances. Hence, it is proposed to center the efforts in the design of an information system which may categorize the data as resources and may administrate them by means of a focussing project which may imply to systematically define its profile, its purposes, requirements, management, goals, evaluation and control. In this way, informatics will be subject to the interests of the organization. As an example of the possibilities of operating a functional information system subordinated to specific needs, it was presented the experience being deve-

loped by the CAE in a local educational system which has allowed to generate a data base prototype, as support to the curricular management, through the training of human resources of the institution and the use of programmes easy to obtain in the market.

As far as the subject of quality in education refers, OREALC commanded the base document to the Centro de Investigaciones y Desarrollo Educativo –CIDE– of Chile. The introduction was made by the Director of OREALC, who set forth the responsibility of educational systems in front of the high rates of repetition, the maintenance of dropout levels and the school failure. All of them indicators of the weak quality of the educational service given to the communities of the Region, increasing the existing differences and that becomes worse by the impact of the economical crisis.

As an answer to the problem, it is necessary the formulating of educational policies which institutionalize practices aimed at:

- monitoring the quality levels of the educational service;
- informing on the achievements of students of fundamental grounds;
- having reliable and standardized information in order to obtain resources which may allow to improve the quality of education; and,
- to permanently discuss the validity of educational strategies in search of their improvement.

It was indicated the presence of three perspectives in order to analyze the educational quality: pedagogical which emphazises the measurement of the performance without questioning the curriculum, cultural which takes care of the relevance of the curricular components; and structural focussing the impact of education on the social structure.

The discussion allowed to know the efforts made in the region, emphasizing various lines which placed the problem in connection of circumstances such as:

- the measurement of the quality of education –through systems integrating various variables–, constitutes, in first place, a political problem which can not be overleapped and in which the technical approach must indicate the proceeding for its solution;
- there is a close relationship between systems of quality measurement and educational planning; which makes it neccesary to coordinate the efforts, due to the implication involved;
- the quality of education refers to all aspects of the educational system, not only to those related with instructional and cognitive matters, being pointed out the need to look after the emotional and social development of students, besides the pertinence of the curriculum with the labour world;
- proper consideration must be given to the resistances involved in the measurement of the education quality when implementing and developing these systems, which must include simple instruments and be periodically applied to register the changes produced and to positively sensitize the users;
- the introduction of an experimental project in some countries of the region, as well as the exchange of information on the results obtained, is considered as highly convenient for future action;
- together with looking after the education quality at the primary level, it was recognized the priority to have it extended to other levels of the system and to visualize the dynamics which emerge when carrying out these initiatives.

The REPLAD Working Plan for the 1990-1991 biennium considered the study of the proposal presented at the Meeting by the Coordinating Secretariat of the Network. In partial meeting at first, and at plenary session afterwards, the participants agreed to present indicative proposals with respect to the four projects that were designed.

The actions set forth and the contingent population who would benefit from them are:

Project I. Training of key personnel

– *Training for local level personnel*	*Interested Institutions*	*Potential participants*
• In-service training course for planners and administrators	18	8 530
• Workshop: Community participation in the Major Project	13	1 985

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Training for local level personnel (cont.)	*Interested Institutions*	*Potential participants*
• Workshop: Information for the decision making at the local level	16	1 935
• Seminar-Workshop: Educational infrastructure at the local level	12	1 211
• Quality indicators in primary education	16	22 000
• Operational Workshop: Supervision technics of the instructional process	15	830
• Self-management of literacy local programmes	11	1 000
• Pilot Workshop: Educational management with computational backing	11	777
– *Training for personnel of the central level*	*Interested Institutions*	*Potential participants*
• National courses of training of trainers in educational planning and administration	13	840
• Course-Workshop on planning, administration and evaluation of educational plans	12	1 920
• Management of Supervision programmes and of instructional evaluation	14	1 065
• Management of Education with computation backing	14	395
• Basic technics on educational investigation	13	306
• Course-Workshop: Planning and Management of literacy medium term programmes	10	285
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Project II. Studies, research and development

	Projects presented
• National experiences on educational decentralization and/or disconcentration	13
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• Theory and practice of the planning and administration in education	16
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Project III. Production, diffusion and exchange of information materials

	Projects presented
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Project IV. Horizontal cooperation

	Topics presented	*Exchange in participants*
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Project V. Support to the formation and consolidation of National Networks

Jointly presented by Argentina and Brazil, this new project is aimed at organizing and strengthening the institutional capacity of the REPLAD, improving the operation of the existing national networks and promoting their creation where they do not yet exist. For their development it will be required the technical support of OREALC in its role of Coordinating Secretariat of the Network's activities.

At the closing session of the meeting it could be appreciated an explicit will to carry out a solidary work and also got to know the offer of the Dominican Republic to host the future V Technical Meeting, placing it with the celebration activities of the Encuentro de Dos Mundos (Two Worlds' encounter) which will be commemorated in 1992.

National Activities

Nicaragua

Seminar-Workshop of the Planning National Network of the Ministry of Education

The Dirección General de Planificación from the Ministry of Education has organized a Seminar-Workshop of a multiplying nature, (6-10 November 1989) with the attendance of 40 representatives from the Direcciones Generales (National Directorates) and Regional Delegations which form the Planning National Network. This event, counting with the support of Unesco in the framework of Project 514 NIC/11, analyzed the Prospective Study on schooling, literacy and education quality, the National Plan of Action, the enunciation of the 1990 Operational Plan, and their contrast with the objectives of the Major Project in the field of Education.

The multiplying nature of this Seminar-Workshop will be expressed in its replica in the 9 educational regions of the country and in its 137 Municipalities, which implies the participation of 1500 leaders of the educational sector in an action which will favour the process of participative and popular planning.

Bolivia

National Seminar-Workshop on microplanning and educational map for technicians, supervisors and directors of the urban and rural areas.

In the context of the technical personnel training of the Central Office and of the planning and supervision departamental Offices of the Ministry of Education, the General Directorate of Educational Planning prepared and carried out a Seminar-Workshop on Microplanning and Educational Map (from 21 through 25 August, 1989) appointed to

supervisors and directors of the urban and rural areas of Bolivia. This event, developed within the frame of a contract/obligation agreed upon with the Unesco Regional Office and the Ministry of Education and Culture of Bolivia, also counted with the support of the OAS and the UNICEF.

As objectives, the training of the participants in the conceptual and methodological aspects which sustain the processes of microplanning and building of the educational map was, and at the same time proposed to provide them with a modular methodological guide aimed at technically supporting the preparation of same. The Seminar-Workshop, held at the locality of Vinto, Department of Cochabamba, was attended by 61 participants from the different departments of the country.

Chile

VIII National Seminar on Educational Administration

Jointly called together by the Centro de Administración Educacional –CAE– of the University of Concepción and by the Educational Administration Programme of the University "Arturo Prat" of Iquique, during November 2 and 3, 1989 it took place the Eighth Seminar on Educational Administration. In this opportunity the event was devoted to the study of the subject "Chilean education in the decade of the '90s– Problems and perspectives" and it was attended by approximately 500 participants, between managers and experts from the different entities of university education which make up the Chilean Universities Network in the field of educational administration and planning, educational authorities, representatives from international organizations, management of community systems for the education and private corporations, as well as representatives of the specialization programmes on educational administration. The organization of the Seminar was under the responsibility of the PAE from the University Arturo Prat, with the sponsorship of the Department of Educational Affairs from the OAS and the CAE.

The activities were initiated with the conference on "Educational Centralization and decentralization in Latin America", by Juan Casassus, regional expert in education planning and administration of the Unesco/OREALC, which was followed by the one on "Education for work, an experience in development" presented by Patricio Lynch, academician from the CAE; "Administration of the municipalized educational institutions of Iquique, analysis of their present situation and future development", in charge of Carmen González, Executive Secretary at the Municipal Development Corporation of Iquique; "Financing of Education, articulation or structural problems", by Jorge Jiménez, Director of CAE; and "Some reflections concerning the educational management member", presented by Braulio Brevis, Coordinator of the Educational Administration Program of the University Arturo Prat.

Two Round Tables took place during the course of the Seminar; the first one covered the subject on "Educational Regionalization and decentralization" and the second one, the "Evaluation of the quality of education".

Publications

Education in the transition to democracy. Cases of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay

This work, which is a part of the research project "Educational plans and policies applied to the processes of transition to democracy in countries of Latin America", is formed by three studies of national cases and a comparison of their characteristics, carried out by a team coordinated by Cecilia Braslavsky from Argentina, and integrated by Luis Alberto Cunha, from Brazil and Carlos Filgueira and Rodolfo Lémez from Uruguay. The study –commisioned by OREALC–, is directed to synthesize from the educational point of view, the stage known as "transition to democracy" which these three countries lived after breaking a long period of military hegemony, to highlight some of the elements detected in the three cases, and to meditate about the common tendencies observed. In order to satisfy these objectives conceptual elements are presented, references are made to the socio-political and economical reality of the region and trends in the field of education. The text begins by reviewing the concepts "transition" and "democracy", to follow with references to the diagnosis of the Latin American crisis' and on to the theoretical analysis of the relationship between the democratic functioning of the educational system and the contribution that education makes to the democratic transition. Further on, the external and internal operation of the educational systems in the three countries is described, in order to find out up to what extent these have been democratized since the breaking with the military hegemony. A comparison is made of changes experienced by the quality of education, and as conclusions, emphasize is made regarding the breaking and continuities of the educational trends, in connection with the dynamic generated by the social actors of the educational sector. The paper prepared by Braslavsky, Cunha, Fil-

gueira and Lémez constitutes a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the most significant experiences which are taking place in the educational field of the Latin American Region. The conclusion –as indicated in the introduction of the book–, assists in attracting attention to the following: "in order to achieve the development required by the needs of the Region, the sole change of kind in military government does not seem enough. Democratization demands to attend the imponderable challenge of equity and participation, but the conditions of economical crisis and lack of resources make it necessary to increase efficacy and efficiency. The great challenge faced by the countries of the region is to make these imperatives compatible".

REGIONAL NETWORK FOR THE TRAINING, IN SERVICE TRAINING AND FURTHER TRAINING OF TEACHERS –PICPEMCE–

Regional Meeting for Evaluation and Planning of the PICPEMCE Network Quito, Ecuador, November 6 - 10, 1989

With the attendance of thirty participants, representing the focal points of the Network in 19 countries of the Region, the performance and essence of the work carried out by PICPEMCE were evaluated, and guidelines set up for the planning of its future activities. Among the new criteria, it was established the search of an increased concentration of actions surrounding specific problems considered as having priority –in order to attain an improvement in the quality of education; a greater emphasis in the outlining of reference frameworks which may allow the availability of information on the magnitude of the problems, their definitions and interpretations, of the strategies used and of the major options advisable to be adopted in the future; a special concern in the development of accumulating mechanisms, which may gather experiences and knowledge capable of being disseminated; the search for generating new dynamics of horizontal cooperation, both, between countries and within countries themselves; and the definition of OREALC as being a coordinating organization, aimed towards establishing a catalizer role in the development of the Network, thus assuring the regional nature in the exchange of initiatives.

In the framework of these criteria, the following were the problems or priority matters established:

- The reading-writing learning process.
- The learning of science.
- The learning of ethical, cultural and humanistic principles.
- Learning processes dealing with the development of children from 0 to 6 years old.
- Learning processes on the integration of handicapped children to regular education, and within society, in general.

The participants also mentioned other problems, such as: job training, learning within the rural media, readjustment of urban-marginal children and teen-agers, the development of creativity and corporal abilities through art and sports. Some focal points brought up the need to count with the regional cooperation to face the institutional changing processes on the subject of teachers' training and in-service training. The participants expressed their will to provide the Network with a new dynamism in order to achieve its specific goals, and contribute through it, to the achievement of the Major Project objectives, specially the one related to the improvement of the quality in education.

Regional Technical Seminar: Training of Teachers for Peace, Understanding and International Cooperation -Quito, Ecuador, 2-4 November, 1989

Within the frame of the PICPEMCE Network, nine Deans and Directors of Teachers' Training centres, three persons responsible for the national programmes of UNESCO Associated Schools and two special guests –Marc Alain Berberat and Luis Weinstein– got together to analyze the links between training processes and the violent situations within the Region. This gathering took advantage of the attendance of its participants to the meeting on Evaluation and Planning of the PICPEMCE Network, which would be held, in the same place, from November 6 through November 10, 1989.

The Seminar covered three stages: discussion of the papers prepared by the special guests; the exchange of experiences and analysis on the links between education and violence; and the setting up of possible trends of action.

The event showed the importance of the subject, and at the same time it was made evident the existing gap between the teaching institutions and the every-day school life –where you permanently live together with the violence. The participants clearly established a number of questions that arised, which could well serve as a guideline for a research activity on the subject, such as:

- Which are the images people make tremselves in connection with the links between every-day school life and the cultural aspects that support violent situations?
- In which way are the educational policies taking care of the ethical preparation of their teachers and students?
- Up to what extent are the job and working conditions of teachers contributing to a weak education, as far as values and attitudes is concerned?
- What kind of role is the Teacher being expected to play in order to support a culture of peace, comprehension and of international cooperation?
- In what extent does the present school contribute to generate and reproduce a culture to the violence?

There were many alternatives of action arising from the work carried out. Special mention deserves the development of teaching investigations with the purpose that the teachers' instructors themselves may critically consider the link between the traditional teaching or school situation and the culture of violence. The Seminar contributed to define one of the most important course of activity of the PICPEMCE Network: the learning of ethical, cultural and humanistic values.

Workshops on Critical Approach

During the months of October and November, OREALC carried out, as part of the PICPEMCE Network activities, several workshops regarding the critical approach method (MAC) in several countries.

During October, one was held in Costa Rica on Critical Approach (A.C.) to the museum, and another one on critical approach to television, organized by National Didactics Centre-CENADI, and at the Jade Museum of the Social Security Institute, which was attended by 51 teachers and technicians from diffferent institutions. During the same month, the Centre for Educational Studies (Centro de Estudios Educativos) and the National Pedagogical University (Universidad Pedagógica Nacional) (UPN) of Mexico cooperated on the carrying out of a workshop sponsored by the National Anthropology Museum of Mexico, which was mainly dedicated to teachers from the UPN, where 30 professionals participated. In November, it took place in Caracas a workshop on Critical Approach to television, sponsored by Pedagogical Experimental University El Libertador (Universidad Pedagógica Experimental El Libertador-UPEL. All these training activities aim at transmitting a methodological proposal for the educational work in teachers' training. The characteristics of the proposal demand a personal experience, specially when working at the museum, which strengthens the use of the method, who takes his reason for existing, from the need of improving the quality of education, according to the commitment of the countries with respect to the Major Project.

Consultation Meeting on the Reading-writing Process

From 16 through 18 October, at the Universidad Pedagógica Nacional of Mexico, it took place a consultation meeting on the document Reading-writing Improvement Project to overcome School Failure for which, extrabudgetary financing will be looked for in the forthcoming months. It was attended by technicians from five guest countries: Argentina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile and Venezuela, and by the hosts from Mexico. The comments made by the specialists attending the meeting helped to provide the document with the realistic and up-dated vision, which is necessary in a project as the one being discussed, which undertakes a subject of the utmost urgency for the Region.

Latin American Consultation Meeting of the World Conference on Education for All - Quito, Ecuador, 28 November - 1st December, 1989

Accepting the invitation and hospitality from the Government of Ecuador, from 28 November through 1st December, it was held in Quito the Latin American Consultation Meeting of the World Conference on Education for All. The event waas attended by 149 paarticipants and 28 observers. Present at the Meeting were 20 Government delegations totalling 68 members, out of which, 15 were headed by ministers, viceministers or officials with equivalent rank, while others were formed by intersectorial repre-

sentatives, that is to say, that besides the educational sector, the financial, economical, labour and planning sectors, etc. were also represented. Besides, the Meeting was attended by 20 non-governmental institutions at national level, 11 intergovernmental United Nations' organizations, plus the sponsors and co-sponsors of the Meeting.

Seminar on Informatics and Education

In Habana, during the week from 20 to 24 November, it was held a meeting on Informatics and Education, from whose results the PIC-PEMCE Network should benefit in order to establish the informatics circuit in the near future. The three pedagogical universities of the Region: Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela attended the event, plus an Argentinian expert, four Cuban specialists and staff from OREALC.

The Seminar gave the opportunity for regional specialists to exchange experiences and information about the subject under discussion. They will carry out an analysis of the present situation of the process of implementation of information technology in the educational process and will study the convenience and feasability of a project for the improvement of teaching of natural sciences and mathematics with informatic support.

Among the results of the meeting, the following can be emphasized:

- The confirmation that all countries in the region are making important efforts –at present–, to introduce the technology of informatics in their educational systems.
- It was emphasized the fact that, in order for efforts to be effective, it is required the cooperation represented by the international technical assistance. Particularly the international institutions must help by giving their support to exchange agreements and through the generation of information which no country can achieve by itself.
- Differing from other meetings on the subject –and expressed in the words of one of the participants–, "it is no longer discussed the convenience or usefulness of informatics in education, the matter is now focussed in the what to do and in how to do it".
- Another trend which made this meeting different from previous ones, was the one related with the communicational dimension of microelectronics. In this case, under the characteristic of data transmission networks in order to strengthen the work of institutions and/or specialists of the Region, and in the development of data bases specially designed for the educational systems of the Region.
- As in previous meetings, it was indicated the priority the training of teachers and experts in the area we are dealing with has, as well as the urgent need to carry out the in-service training of teachers.
- Finally, the participants wanted to leave on record the relevance, pertinence and oportuneness of the project aimed at the improvement in the teaching of natural sciences and mathematics.
- With reference to the above mentioned project, they expressed the convenience of including the instruction on technology, the generation of a document which may serve the purpose of orientation for concurrent processes in the different countries and the urgency to speed up the constitution of the informatics network referred to in the mentioned project.

Caribbean Regional Consultation on Satisfaction of Learning Basic Needs

Twelve Ministers of Education and delegations from the english and netherlands speaking Caribbean and from Haiti met in Kingston, Jamaica, from 22 through 24 November, 1989, with the purpose of discussing the documents of the World Conference on Education for All.

The participants appraised the initiative and expressed positive opinions about the documents, notwithstanding the fact that they considered it necessary a reformulation of them –in many aspects. In this respect it was mentioned as one of its important limitations, the absence of the subject dealing with mechanisms of approach of the countries to the resources coming from the cooperation agencies. The documents do not allow to realize the problem of structural adjustments, treasury difficulties and the burden that for the most needed countries represent the payment of the external debt and the economic consequences derived from it. It was indicated that the FMI should take part in this kind of initiatives.

Notwithstanding the technical improvement required by the documents, the participants –coming from governments, non-governmental organizations and independent public figures–, expressed their will to back the initiative arising from the World Conference on Education for All.

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Area:
Data base of educational, qualitative and statistical information

Course of action:
Base of educational statistics by countries

CRESALC has made progress in the preparation of a qualitative data base on university education which is available within the series of national monographies prepared for each one of the Latin American and Caribbean countries. It has to do with codified information –of a non-numerical nature–, which will serve as complement to the quantitative information which is being collected by means of the questionnaire sent out to each one of the countries. CRESALC looks forward for a periodical updating of both data bases.

Area:
Analysis of statistical and documental information

Course of action:
Publications

Preparation of information on Texts. A study of the Universidad Javeriana has allowed to identify more than 100 researches and essays carried out in Colombia, on the production and use of school texts and about their impact on education quality. By suggestion of SIRI, the Mastery on Education of the Universidad Javeriana and the Research Center of the Universidad Pedagógica will prepare Analytical Abstracts (RAEs) on those subjects, which would be published in a specialized volume on the subject with analytical and author indexes. It is expected for other countries to make similar efforts in the future.

Area:
Analysis of statistical and documental information

Course of action:
Information processing and the preparation of reports

It will be promoted the coordination of activities between the SIRI and the REDUC in Central America. The UNESCO Sub-regional Office in that Sub-region has been working with a group of centers in order to identify the researches and essays produced by the Ministries of Education in connection with the three main objectives of the Major Project in Education. The possibility is under consideration, to embody that information within the Latin American Network on Educational Information (REDUC) so that it may be available to any country.

Area:
Exchange and use of the information and documentation

Course of action:
Information systems for the administration

Development of Evaluation and Informatics in Colombia: A mission from the SIRI worked together with a national work group set up at the Evaluation Division of the Ministry of Education, in the analysis of alternative methods in order to establish a National Evaluation System on the quality of education. The initial emphasis would be placed on the primary education, but on a second stage, secondary education level would be included. At this opportunity, the cooperation between the Evaluation group and the one in charge of the Information System (SIED) was examined. Aspects related to the performance –subject to be measured in the first stage, were analyzed, together with the kind of samples through which said instruments could be applied.

Area:
Exchange and use of the information and documentation

Course of action:
Information systems for the administration

Computers would be delivered to primary schools in Venezuela. The communication media in Venezuela announced –by the end of October 1989–, that budgetary financial allotments had been assigned for the purchase of a computer for every school in Venezuela. Information is not yet available as to the way in which these equipments will be used at the schools, but it is a news that suggests the convenience of starting to examine new methods of obtaining information about the operation of the educational systems in Latin America.

Area:
Exchange and use of the information and documentation

Course of action:
Information sub-networks

The meeting of the 27 research and documentation centers in Latin America that

integrate the REDUC –held in Spain, in October 1989–, allowed to submit the activities and projects of the SIRI and to find ways for a systematic cooperation. Interest exists in most of the centers, to identify researches and essays in the three areas related to the Major Project in Education. The centers are willing to choose, among those three areas, some important subjects and to present, systematically, the RAEs (Analytical Abstracts) that are available in each one of those subjects, indexed by author, and with more precise keywords Microtesauro (Micro-index) which allows to identify most part of the authors who have worked on that subject. This constitutes an excellent starting point in order to complete the compendium of the worthy researches and essays on the subject, and that can be processed in the national center of the country to which each new author identified belongs.

Area:
Exchange and use of the information and documentation

Course of action:
Programmes for the analysis and projections of information

The 2.3 version of Micro Isis –delivered in 1989–, is made known. At present, 11 out of the 17 REDUC centers that process their information by means of personal computers, are using the latest version of Micro Isis distributed during 1989. In February 1990 it will take place in Caracas, Venezuela, a new meeting of the main users and advisors in the use of this program. The existence of some computer programmes which allow the transfering of "files" from other data base programmes to Micro isis and vice-versa, will expedite the flexibility in the cooperation among users that operate with different programmes.

Area:
Information systems for the Administration

Course of action:
Seminars/Congresses

During the regional course on Demography held at the CELADE, a preliminary version of the Educational Situation in Latin America was presented –which is being prepared as part of the working programme of the SIRI–, and some of the patterns of analysis and compatibilization of the information being used with SIRI, were discussed. The comparison among different sources of data, as for instance, those produced by the ministries of education and those originating in the censuses, would suggest that the error margins in total enrolment are small (2 to 3%), but there is a relevant underestimation at the repetition levels which can be noticed in the statistical forms, yearly collected.

OTHER OREALC ACTIVITIES

Line of action:
Studies/Researches/Evaluation

Field of Action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
Regional

Registered bibliography on literacy

In November, the Bureau of International Education-BIE (Oficina Internacional de Educación) established a contract with OREALC with the purpose that the latter one prepares –through a consultant–, a registered bibliography on works in Spanish referring to the matter of literacy in Latin America and the Caribbean. For each work (book, document or article) an analytical card will be made out which will specify its structure and contents, as well as the more relevant conclusions and recommendations.

The analytical summaries will be presented at the UNESCO Headquarters in English or French before April 1st. 1990. This work will be incorporated to a wider project of up-dating of the world bibliography on the subject, with occasion of the ILY celebration.

Line of action:
Studies/Research/Evaluations

Field of action:
Literacy

Level of activity:
National

Final evaluation of the UNESCO/AGFUND Project on Literacy and Post-literacy with audio-visual media (Peru)

During the months of September and October, it

took place in Peru the final evaluation of this project. With this purpose, visits were made to the centers (Ayacucho, Sicuani, Cusco and Lima) and meetings were held with representatives of the institutions involved (OREALC; Peruvian National Commission for the cooperation with UNESCO; the General Board of Adult Education; Teleducation National Institute; National Institute for Planning, and experts).

Among the main conclusions derived from the evaluation, it can be emphasized the following ones:

- The project admits the principle that literacy must be carried out in the mother tongue of the participants; in the same way, it revalues the community as the space generating educational processes.
- The Project has made literate 1000 people since its beginning in 1987, and other 4000 are in the process of becoming literate; 40% of that population has been made literate in its vernacular tongue.
- It has provided elements to link literacy and adult primary education, as well as strategies to call together non-governmental organizations.
- It has succeeded in achieving multiplying effects, since persons who have been made literate, organize themselves to make other adults literate, specially in their family groups.
- It has produced teaching materials for the bilingual education, reading-writing texts and different guides for the quechua chanka variant, plus the Linguistics and Grammar Runasimi-Chanka book.
- It has given special attention to the rural woman and to the indigenous population.
- It has had no interruptions, in spite of the difficult socio-political situation and of the changes occurred with the educational authorities.
- The Project has laid down the foundations for the organization of a teleducation sub-system.

Line of action:
Training and technical assistance

Field of action:
Adult Education

Level of activity:
Inter-regional

VI Collective Consultation of the NGOs on literacy and adult education (Quito, Ecuador, 10-15 December 1989)

This inter-regional meeting of the NGOs had the purpose of analyzing the planning of post-literacy –aspect that has been considered as a fundamental convergency point for literacy and adult education–, and it was included among sectorial consultations made to the NGOs which are called together by UNESCO, and that demonstrate the close cooperation existing between them.

Consultations on literacy have been called together on a yearly basis since 1984, and their role is to facilitate the exchange of opinions and experiences between guest organizations, with the purpose of improving their efficiency and effectiveness, as well as to promote the cooperation and joint activities.

This VI Consultation was carried under the perspective of the ILY and in the context of the action for the decade, so as to overcome illiteracy before the year 2000. The purpose was to prepare a group of common activities which may help including the NGOs into the post-literacy tasks plus incentives to carry them out.

The NGOs presented project documents, following criteria ellaborated by UNESCO, which had different levels of development (project themselves, or draft summarized in a preliminary version) and different institutional methods for future sponsoring (projects to be sponsored by two NGOs represented at the meeting; projects to be sponsored by one NGO but open to other co-sponsors; or a summary draft without a sponsor but that can be developped as a final project by two or more NGOs represented at the Consultation).

The meeting was organized by the UNESCO Headquarters together with the OREALC and the Quito Supporting Unit to the Major Project. It was held in Quito, Ecuador from 10 through 15 December and it was attended by forty four world representatives of NGOs, among which there are 9 belonging to the Latin American and Caribbean Region. Besides, the meeting was also attended by an important group of NGOs of Ecuador, whose situation was deeply analyzed during the course of a special session, and it was attended as well by experts from UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and from OREALC. In the next bulletin, the main recommendations arising from the Consultation, will appear summarized.

Line of action:
Publications

Field of action:
Adult Education

Level of activity:
Regional

The contribution of non-governmental organizations to the development of adult education (Author: García Huido-

bro, Juan Eduardo). Santiago, Chile, OREALC, 1989

This publication presents one of the basic documents of the VI Collective Consultation of non-Governmental Organizations on Literacy and Adult Education. Considering that the meeting has an interregional character, the purpose of this basic document prepared in Latin America is to analyze the role of the non-governmental organizations of the Region, as far as the field of literacy and adult education is concerned.

This essay describes the characteristics of the Latin American NGOs as well as their organization methods, matters and populations with which they perform.

The study points out the relationship between the Latin American NGOs and a new focussing of the cooperation for development, which created in the industrialized countries the NGOs of cooperation for development (agencies).

The document evaluates the Latin American NGOs together with their potentialities and limitations. It is particularly mentioned the dependence on external financing as a factor which affects different fields of their action and creates institutional vulnerability.

The role of the NGOs in Latin America is also analyzed in connection with the Adult Education. In this context, NGOs are placed in the field of "popular education". Their main contributions are related to the introduction of a sharing methodology, as well as to the gathering of experiences in the training of base leaders, communitary educational alternatives, recovering and diffusion of appropriate technologies and works with urban and rural women.

The possible role the NGOs may play in the future of Adult Education (EDA), is stated and the changes introduced in the political and social scene of our countries are observed.

Participation of OREALC in meeting of experts on Woman and Culture

The ECLAC Woman and Development Unit set up a meeting of experts on the cultural aspects of woman participation (Santiago, Chile, 22-24 November). OREALC took part in the mentioned seminar through one of its consultant. The meeting was attended by experts from ECLAC and from Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Cuba and Spain.

The meeting analyzed the situation in the Region, the economical crisis, along with the crisis of the interpretative paradigms; the cultural characteristics in Latin America and, in particular, the coexistance of different worlds.

During the meeting it was confirmed the need to ellaborate integral development strategies for women that look into the cultural dimension. Also, the importance of thoroughly analyzing the cultural factors which affect and define the condition of the woman, and specially: the organization of her everyday life; her way to incorporate herself to the collective production of symbols; the learning required by a more democratic society; the appropriation of culture as a way for the building up of her identity.

Among the conclusions of the work, emphasize is made on the learning achieved by the students with regard to the meanings and values found in their social representations. Besides, it is confirmed that in order to develop a project of this nature, there are conditions required –which are not always easy to accomplish–, both, in terms not only of the characteristics of the teaching team, but of the institutional situation as well. On one hand, teachers willing to accept the critics to their own schemes and committed with their work; and on the other hand, an institution having an integral institutional project capable of facing the educational work at its cognitive and values levels'.

Line of action:
Publications

Field of action:
Adult Education

Level of activity:
Regional

University Social Service on Adult Education (Author: Educational Department team, Universidad Nacional de Luján, Argentina, Brusilovsky, Silvia and others). Santiago, Chile, OREALC 1989.

This publication describes an experience of the University Social Service (U.S.S.) in Literacy and Adult Education, performed during the academic year 1986 (May-December) by the Department of Education of the Universidad Nacional de Luján, Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The Service forms an experimental project of participation of senior education institutions (through their students and professors) in the development of communities and within specific areas of same. Besides, it is included in the UNESCO activities' programme aimed at promoting innovating trends and in favour of the democratization of university education in order to stimulate its contribution to the development of the rest of the educational system.

This working document summarizes the development process of a specific university social service and presents criteria and methodologies of evaluation capable of being applied to similar programs. In the same way, it

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offers conceptual elements in connection with the idea of "university social service" and its projections.

International Literacy Year

During the last four months of 1989, different countries carried out activities in order to inform and sensitize public opinion about illiteracy and literacy.

In Honduras, the "Dirección General de Educación de Adultos" organized an educational fair on September 8 International Literacy Day created with the purpose of serving as a cultural space for exchange and learning.

In Colombia, the Ministry of Education, together with the Centro de Información de las Naciones Unidas in Bogota, also organized on September 8 a forum with the purpose of discussing the establishment of an integrated adult education system in the country; it was attended by representatives from the MEN, UNICEF and from the United Nations Documentation Center. This forum was broadcasted by the press, radio and television.

On the other hand, in the English-speaking Caribbean a group of activities on information took place, such as: in Trinidad and Tobago it was organized an integral activities program from 4 to 10 September (round tables, publication of articles on literacy in the newspapers, information on the radio about the subject, placards and posters on the streets, training courses).

In Dominica, on account of the International Literacy Day, there were organized parades, exhibitions and lectures. In Grenada, the Minister of Education addressed a speach to the population on account of the International Literacy Day. In Jamaica, it was celebrated the fact that the JAMAL Foundation was granted the UNESCO International Prize for the promotion of literacy. In Curacao, it took place a celebration and debate about the subject.

With occasion of the International Literacy Day, OREALC sent away to institutions of different kinds, cassettes and recorded tapes containing the message from the UNESCO General Director, Mr. Federico Mayor.

Finally, it is important to emphasize the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes and Distinctions. Distinctions –as indicated below–, were granted to Latin America and the Caribbean programmes:

- Jamaican movement for the promotion of literacy (JAMAL), Jamaica. Prize Nadezhda K. Krupskaya.
- Association Educational Dimension (Bogota, Colombia, NGO), Literacy Norm Prize, Honorific Mention.
- "Operativo Sandino Vive" Program, in Rio San Juan, Cinco Pinos and Chinandega, Ministry of Education (Nicaragua), Recognition granted by the Jury.

* This activity is organized by the Unesco Headquarters in Paris, upon the basis of consultations made with the Regional Offices

OREALC PUBLICATIONS

- *La educación ambiental en la educación técnica y profesional.* Sven Grabe. Environmental Education serie. Module 24. Santiago, Chile, August 1989.

- *Glosario de términos sobre medio ambiente.* Vicente Sánchez y Beatriz Guiza. Environmental Education serie. Santiago, Chile, September 1989.

- *Lineamientos para el desarrollo de la educación ambiental no formal.* Environmental Education seriel Module 23. Santiago, Chile, October 1989.

- *Educación en la transición a la democracia. Casos de Argentina, Brasil y Uruguay.* Cecilia Braslavsky et al. Santiago, Chile, October 1989.

- *Información e innovación en educación.* No 60. Bureau International Education Bulletin. Santiago, Chile, September 1989.

- *Creando ambientes adecuados para el sano desarrollo de los niños.* First and second book. Santiago, Chile, December 1989.

- *Educación ambiental: Módulo para la formación de profesores y supervisores en servicio para las escuelas primarias.* Environmental Education serie. Module 6. Santiago, Chile, November 1989.

- *Servicio Social Universitario en educación de adultos. Análisis de una experiencia.* Unesco/Universidad Nacional de Luján, Argentina. Santiago, Chile, October 1989.

- *Pictogramas para el uso de agroquímicos.* Environmental education leaflet Santiago, Chile, September 1989.

- *Contacto.* Vol. XIV, No 3. Unesco-UNEP Environmental Education Newsletter. Santiago, Chile, September 1989.

OREALC PUBLICATIONS

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